No Idea

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by Anchanee

Summary

As you might suspect, Hannibal Lecter does not deal well with being an Omega so he hid it well all his life. Sadly, some things like heats can't be hidden. Thats when Will enters the scene. He is an Alpha, caring by nature but quite unstable due to his empathy. Not exactly the strong, dominant person the average Omega could look up to. But Hannibal is not the average Omega and he sees the hidden strength that allows Will to enter the darkest minds and still find his way back into the light.

So we have a slightly unstable Alpha, a reluctant Omega and a relationship that defies all expectations. Have fun reading.

Notes

After reading an Omegaverse with Hannibal as the Omega I was absolutely hooked with the idea.
I started to twist and turn it into my head and a story came from it. Just a few scenes, nothing big, certainly nothing as big as Serve and Obey.

After 30.000 words I have learned two things:
First of all: Small ideas in my head expand magically on paper (or on screen in this case).
Second: I am unable to dabble! There are no short scenes or connection of incidents.
When my mind makes up a story it makes all of it, the important parts, the drama, the fluff, the slash and EVERYTHING inbetween. It's kind of annoying actually because these things just want to get out of my head. I can't even read one of my favourite book-series at the moment because Will and Hannibal run rampaging through my head. Very inconvenient.

By the way, I can be found on tumblr: Anchanee

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by The Pleasure of Giving In by DrJLecter

A Missed Appointment

Will was tired and angry when he arrived at Dr. Lecter's office. They had found a new victim just yesterday, a young woman, a singer. She had been dramatically set up on the stage she had graced with her performance in life. Her arms had been set up in a pose as if she had been receiving ovations for an excellent performance she had not been able to give, since her lungs had been removed and her ribcage had been stuffed with carefully rolled up programs.

The profiler, who had worked for the behavioural science unit for the last few years had taken one look at the scene to decide that she had been a victim of The Ripper. Though, as always with this highly intelligent psychopath, it would be near impossible to prove Will's theory. He was used to it by now, frustrated, but used to it.

After a night of uneasy rest he had decided to visit Hannibal Lecter, a man he considered … well, not really a friend – Will didn't do friends with his partially somewhat frazzled frame of mind – but at least someone he felt comfortable being around. For someone like Will Graham that said a lot. He had missed his last appointment with the psychiatrist, in favour of going over evidence of their latest victim. Now a part of him was eager to see the man again, there was something about him that soothed a part of Will that seemed to be constantly at loss.

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"I'm really sorry, Mr. Graham, but Doctor Lecter left his office after his three-thirty appointment yesterday, and has not returned today. He just called briefly around six to send me home. I am sure he will be in the office by tomorrow morning. Do you want me to scheduled time for you?" The receptionist offered. Will could sense her unease, but she was devoted to cover for her employer even without knowing what was going on.

"Thank you, Miss Cunnings, but I think that won't be necessary." The young man set her at ease and left the office. It left Will worried that not even Hannibal's receptionist was aware where her employer was. Dr. Lecter's work ethic was impeccable. In all the month's Will had known the doctor, he had always been in the office during work-hours, never missing a single meeting.

The wisest course of action would be to leave, head home and try to take a catnap, before he had to hold his lecture in the early afternoon. His current class was hard to deal with at the best of times, their eagerness to prove themselves fit for fieldwork at the FBI grated on Will's nerves more and more because most of them seemed to miss the point of their work entirely. There was nothing striking or impressive about their job, apart from being confronted with the scum of this planet. They all saw themselves felling serial killers and basking in the glory of successes without factoring in the downside of endless chases and leads that pointed towards dead ends. Nobody wanted to see the soul-crushing frustration finding victim over victim without getting any closer to the killer.

But working for the FBI usually implied one thing more than anything else: The need to look at dead bodies, seeing the lives of countless, innocent people being washed down the drain so

that they could be cut open during an autopsy, just to get inkling what the perpetrator had thought about when killing them. There were days like today, when Will simply wanted to leave all this behind. To live with his dogs as far away from society as possible, never needing to look at blood-splatter-patterns to decipher the design of a particularly sophisticated serial killer.

Yes, that's what he should do. But Will had never been someone who listened to his mind more than his emotions. The flaw came with being an Alpha in a society that barely looked twice if you didn't radiate the right character traits. The profiler was aware that most people saw him as a Beta, some even as an Omega, pliant and timid, but being an Alpha meant the undeniable need to look after people, to make sure that they were alright. That was even more true for people he had an emotional connection to, and Dr. Lecter was definitely one of them.

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When Will arrived at the nice town-house of the doctor, he felt an itch at the back of his neck. Something was wrong, but he couldn't lay a finger at it. Assertively he reached for his weapon, pulling the handgun from the glove compartment of his beat-up car, fastening the holster to his belt at the small of his back. It would not do any good to have to explain to Jack why he had been armed when off-duty, best to keep the gun out of sight.

His unease only increased when Will approached the door of Dr. Lecter's mansion. His first knock remained unanswered, as did his second. When he probed the handle, he found the door to be unlocked and reached for his gun when entering the vast home.

As soon as he had entered, the most delectable smell assaulted him. Closing his eyes for a moment, he fought down a groan, before walking through the house. "Dr. Lecter, are you home?"

Squishy noises came from the kitchen, and when nobody answered, Will walked towards it, recoiling when he spotted Hannibal Lecter behind the central unit, squeezing the air from a set of nice lungs, bloody knife, oils and herbs draped around the wooden board he was working on, wearing nothing but a blood splattered apron.

In that very moment, everything fell into place. Responses to crime-scenes, inconspicuous behaviour that could not have been more apparent, references and mind-games this man had thrown Will's way for the better part of the last year. In front of Will Graham stood the infamous Chesapeake Ripper, the only man the empathy had put his blind trust into, only to be manipulated by him through and through.

Will's hand closed around his gun. He wanted to draw it, wanted to shove Dr. Lecter away from his last trophy and drag him to Jack, proofing once and for all that he had not invented the psychopath that rode the highs of many serial killers that had occupied the FBI's time for the last year.

The very same person Jack had decide to call, when Will couldn't handle the stress of this job on his own, for as long as Agent Crawford needed his unparalleled ability to crawl into the minds of the greatest psychopaths, and bring them down. Will wanted to laugh at the irony that Jack himself had given the Chesapeake Ripper the chance to get close enough to the cases of several serial killers so that he could copy their methods and get away with his own killings.

The saddest thing was: Hannibal had helped. For the most parts, actually for every other perpetrator but himself, he had supported Will. The psychiatrist had proven an invaluable ally for the empathy to work his way out of the darkest minds, allowing him to think clearly enough to anticipate the killers next step and either catch him in advance or in the act so that there was no doubt that he would get the maximum penalty. Will could not have worked for the last year without him, not as efficiently as he had.

Hannibal had never looked down at Will for getting lost in the minds of others. He had never told the Alpha that more was expected from him, that he was weak for not being able to hold his ground against the horrors that surrounded him. The profiler had thought the doctor to be an Alpha, especially with the palpable displays of dominant character traits, or at least a Beta, regarding his penchant for social gatherings.

But here, in the middle of the kitchen, stood Hannibal Lecter, dressed only in a white apron, surrounded by an open fridge, an open wine-cooler-unit and his freezer. The air was chilled, still, he was sweating profoundly, despite wearing not a stitch of clothing apart from said apron. And when the man raised his eyes towards the intruder, Will found them to be glassy and unseeing. No, Hannibal Lecter was neither Alpha nor Beta, he was an Omega, and he was in full heat.

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Much Needed Help

The thrill from his last killing had left Hannibal unheeding of his own body. The thrill of the kill had carried him though the next day and in the afternoon the realization had dawned, that it was not the thermostat in his office was to blame for him sweating so profoundly after lunch. After everything that had happened, his countless sessions with Will Graham that had occupied his mind long before and after their interactions, the quite unique and enticing Alpha as well as his latest victim had left the doctor miscalculating and is heat had hit him unprepared.

Usually he took care of this inopportune situation, days in advance. He would stock his pantry and his fridge. Prepare for a week-long holiday that left him free to deal with a biological imperative he detested. He had used a lot of his time and effort to find a way to supress these heats, so far he had not had any luck. For males it was only once every twelve lunar circles that their body made themselves known. But this one heat was inevitable. Drugs could shift the date but never get rid of it entirely, not if the Omega wanted to stay healthy.

It had been bad when he had returned from the office yesterday, but he had been convinced that he could take care of the extraordinary set of lunges he had acquired yesterday, before losing himself in his bodily needs. But now everything about him was burning. His skin felt aflame wherever the soft silk-apron was touching him. His mind burned and made it impossible for him to gather his wits. It was as if he was beside himself, able to watch from a distance, but unable to intervene.

That was the reason why he was currently squeezing the air out of the lungs, as he had done for the better part of the last thirty minutes. He should oil the meat, season it and let it sit in the freezer. But he couldn't bring himself to change his position. It was too hard, even lifting his arm seemed to be impossible. And all of a sudden there was an Alpha in his kitchen.

He felt the Alpha more than he saw him, a genetic response he was helpless against. He was aware of the comforting sense of power that approached him. He cursed himself for being weak, for giving in to his desires, but when the Alpha stepped up behind him, breathing over his neck, he clung onto the counter with everything he had, whimpering in need of contact. Still the other person kept its distance.

"Show me. Show me how you preserve the meat." The voice was soft and oh so soothing. It was as if weaves of cool water were washing over him, ease the burning. Hannibal watched himself finally reaching for the bowl he had prepared in advance, shakily covered the bottom with the seasoning he had decided upon and placed the meat in it. His hands were trembling when he took the oil, but before he could make a mess another hand steadied his, helped him douse the meat, covering it to preserve it and then the bowl was taken from him.

He heard the doors of his refrigerator, the wine-cooler as well as the freezer being closed. Instantly the heat was back full force. Shakily he clawed at the apron that all of a sudden felt like sandpaper on his skin. "Shhh … stop that!" The voice chided him and a moment later the offending piece of clothing was gone. Now Hannibal stood in front of his work-island, all

naked with sweat running over his back and all he wanted to do was sink back against this person. But the Alpha was already gone, moved through his kitchen, making sure that everything was in order, something the man honestly couldn't care less about right now, before touching him again, intertwining their fingers.

Hannibal followed a gentle tug, glad that the Alpha seemed to walk towards his bedroom. Not that it would have mattered. The Omega would have followed everywhere this Alpha would have led him. Self-determination, dignity, composure all the traits he valued so very much in his every-day life, had gone out of the window the moment this person had lain hands on him. The tiny, sentient part of Hannibal's mind screamed at him, demanded from him to pull back, to run, to hide. But the doctor knew that as soon as the Alpha would allow him to touch he would be down on his knees, begging for his hands, his lips his cock, beg to be taken, to be mated; anything to ease the burning desire in his gut that was overpowering all of his senses.

There really was nothing Hannibal could do, except to vow to himself that, as soon as this heat was over, he would kill the Alpha that had dared to break into his house, mating him when he was at his most vulnerable. There really was no other outcome for this situation, since the biological imperative for both designations was to mate when the Omega was in heat. He dealt with enough 'forced pairing' on a day to day basis, to give in to the illusion that this person was any different.

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Will was shocked to see Hannibal so beside himself. The doctor didn't even seem to be able to understand him. Nevertheless he gravitated towards the FBI-profiler as soon as the man approached him. But all the Omega could do was concentrate on his current task, whimpering needy. The empath knew that they had to settle this situation first, to get Dr. Lecter though his heat, before they could make any decision regarding the doctor's future.

So he admitted defeat, shooting an Omega in heat really was no option after all, and stepped around the doctor. In a low, compulsory tone, Will had guided the man though the preparations of the dish and then put the meat away. Despite his revulsion towards eating human flesh – all the while being well aware that he might have done so several times in the past – he knew that the doctor would be highly upset when his heat was over, if the meat had gone bad. So despite his personal preferences, Will couldn't bring himself to simply order the man to throw it away.

Afterwards he cleaned the kitchen, being as thorough and swift as possible, because whenever he put more than half a meter of distance between himself and the Omega, the shivers in the naked body seemed to increase as did his level of distress. Obviously the man thought that he had done something wrong whenever Will left his proximity and hated himself for it, if the nails that dug painfully into his the palms of his hands were any indication. Still he remained unmoving in the middle of the kitchen, resisting his desire to plaster himself to the Alpha since Will had ordered him to wait.

It seemed to be pure torture, still the doctor obeyed and in record-time Will had the kitchen spotless and guided the Omega to his bedroom.

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To say that Hannibal Lecter was enthusiastic would have been an understatement. As soon as Will had closed the door the Omega was upon him, reaching for his hands, clawing at his clothes. His frantic attempts to get the younger man into his bed were accompanied by quiet, yet desperate pleads in a language Will couldn't understand. Still he had no troubles deciphering their meaning, since Hannibal was painfully erected and his entire body was flushed and shivering. His heat – unsatisfied for more than a day – had to be close to unbearable at this point.

Aware that he was only torturing the Omega by his restrain, he assisted the hectic movements and removed his clothes. When he was finally naked Hannibal sank against him, plastered his body against the smaller man's and whimpered anxiously into the crock of his neck. Unwilling to drag this out any further, Will allowed him only a moment of calm, before he reached for his neck and stirred him towards the bed. Dr. Lecter went only to willing and spread out, presenting his enticing backside.

Slick was already running down his thighs, a sure proof that Will wouldn't need to waste time by preparing him. A deep, usually well hidden part of the empath wanted to kneel behind this beautiful man, taste the fluids his body produced in abandon, savour the unique taste. But Will knew that there was no chance to hold back his desire to stake a claim if he allowed the heady taste of the doctor to cloud his mind. So he merely nudged the Omega into the middle of the bed and crawled after him.

His own cock was hard already, had been ever since he had become aware of the naked Omega in the kitchen. The realizations of *who* was standing before him and *what* he was working on had supressed the biological imperative to take the Omega right there and then. But Dr. Lecter had been suffering unbearably right before him, his need had nearly overwhelmed Will after a few minutes of being in the same room with him. He would care about the Chesapeake Ripper later, when he was able to find a sentient thought in his head that was not connected to mating with Hannibal Lecter.

For now he concentrated on sinking into the willing body that was presented so enticingly, mirroring the blissful groan from the man on the bed. Will wanted to go easy on Hannibal. Somehow he had troubles imagining Dr. Lecter as a person that favoured rough sex. On the other hand, he had also had troubles imagining him killing people, a thought that was now not as far off as it had been an hour ago. The first sliding in and out of the pliant body before him where easy and barely noticeable because the Omega was so wet. But when the man before him made an impatient sound and pushed back demandingly Will only smiled into his neck and reached around the strong torso.

Pulling the doctor up for leverage, Will started to fuck him in earnest. Ploughed deep into the overheated body, revelling into the noises of bliss he was able to elect from the male in heat. It didn't take long for Hannibal to come for the first time. His deprived body took the please that was provided and spilled all over the bed sheet. Still, it was not nearly enough to satisfy him, if it changed anything at all, it made him even more demanding, rolling his hips to get the most of the men who was fucking him into his body, groaning, caressing Will's strong arms that kept him upright on the bed.

Two more times he came and when the empath joined him for the last orgasm, Hannibal spilled over the bed with something inbetween a triumphant shout and a sob. Sinking down, carefully pulling the doctor away from the drenched part of the comforter, Will couldn't help but smile when Hannibal rolled himself into a ball right beside him, crouching as close as possible to be surrounded by the Alpha from all sides.

Aware that the Omega was shivering from cold, now that the first weave of heat had been battered down, Will looked around in the bedroom, stretching to reach for a plaid that rested on a chair next to the bed. Stilling an anxious whine from the Omega because he moved away by gently caressing his hair, Will covered the both of them, warping himself around the other man, calming him so that he could find some rest.

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Reflections

When the FBI profiler was sure that the doctor was sleeping comfortably, he rose from the bed, debating with himself if he could use the bathroom for a quick shower. Shaking his head at the irrational thought – he had fucked Dr. Lecter, a shower surely would be the last of the man's worries when he came around – so Will used the chance to wash off the sweat and cum, before putting on his boxer-shorts and a flannel shirt. Entering the small office the doctor had furnished in his own home, he took his time to call Alana, persuaded her to act as a guest lecturer for his classes. Then he informed the doctor's receptionist that her employer would not be in the office before Tuesday and that she should reschedule all of his appointments.

Then he went for the kitchen. Rummaging through the cupboards, Will was frustrated, though not surprised, to not find a single can of soup. He discovered something that was labelled >beef gravy< and from the sparse knowledge he had about high cuisine he was reasonably sure that this was some kind of sauce, made of roasted meat. So he heated the gravy up and added a water until it was fit for consumption. When it started fill the kitchen with its delicious smell, Will went to prepare some sandwiches. The Alpha was well aware that he could not keep up with the superior cooking skills of the Omega this kitchen belonged to, especially since he was not willing to use food he was able to identify without the shadow of doubt.

He chuckled when he discovered a glass of peanut butter (smooth) in the back of one of the cupboards, hidden behind a row of expensive jams. When he prepared two sandwiches, cheese and tomatoes and one with peanut butter and jam, he reflected on his discoveries of the day. There he was, standing in a fancy kitchen most chefs would be jealous at. Working on a kitchen island where no doubt human meat had been prepared upon. So why had he called Alana and Dr. Lecter's receptionist and not Jack Crawford?

Why was the thought of leaving the preparations of the meal behind, in favour of turning a serial killer over to the FBI so unbearable to him? He was not bonded to Hannibal Lecter, would never be because he really couldn't see the doctor submitting to anybody, least of all him with his numerous mental problems. Dr. Lecter simply was not the type who handed over the reins of his fate to someone else, especially not one who could not be more different from him than Will was. To be able to be who he was, Dr. Lecter had to be a highly functioning psychopath, detached from the cruel acts he committed. Quite contrary to Will, whose job was to get into the head of the most abhorrent serial killers, sharing their feelings to be able to catch them.

He had no obligations towards the man who had tricked him and toyed with him for the better part of the last year. Putting down the knife, looking at the meal he had just prepared, resting his head on the steal counter of the work space. The answer was easy, far too easy so that Will wondered how he could not have seen it right from the beginning: he cared for Dr. Lecter. Not because the man was an Omega, he had not even known that before today, but because Will thought of him as a friend, felt obliged to care for him and protect him no

matter the cost. In what kind of twisted world was he living that he felt obliged to protect a murderer?

He wanted to hate the man for the manipulation, wanted to go up and shout at him, maybe even strangle him (at least a bit). But he knew he would never be unable to do so. The doctor was completely ruled by his biology at the moment. The sentient part of his brain was drowned by hormones, so he would be unable to either defend himself or argue with Will. And oh how much Will wanted to argue with him, wanted to shout at him and call him on all the despicable things he had done, not only to his victims but to Will himself. The profiler was well aware that as a psychopath Dr. Lecter was detached enough from the act of killing to feel no remorse. That lack of remorse echoed in the empathic images he got from the scenes. The part of the doctor he had gotten to know during their sessions was one of a caring male, who had tried to help him, a male he had come to care about in return.

Will hated himself for being unable to decide how much of this help had been a calculated measure to get him onto the doctor's side, and how much of it had been honest caring for Will's wellbeing. Was he even able to care? Or was everything in Dr. Lecter's life a game where he was king and everybody else just a pawn?

Well, it was not as if the idea was not evident. Will was reasonably sure that he was nothing more than a pawn on Jack Crawford's chess-board either. He liked the strong Alpha who tried his very best to catch the monsters of humanity, with as little loss of human life as possible. He had the right incentive, even if Will did not always approve of his methods, namely dragging him from the lecture hall back into the field.

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More than an hour had passed since Will had left Hannibal and he carefully balanced the plate with the two sandwiches and two cups of 'soup' when returning to the bedroom. The moment he entered, the hormones the Omega was giving off made him rock hard again. With a groan Will adjusted himself, more than ready to take the doctor again, but this situation was demanding a lot from the both of them. First they needed sustenance, then they could return to the task at hand, namely easing Dr. Lecter's heat.

They had to be swift about their meal, because the other man was already turning and whimpering quietly on the bed, even in his sleep. Luckily he had turned towards the edge where Will had lain before and not moved to the soiled part of the comforter. Gently nudging the Omega awake, the empathy was not surprised to find his waist circled by strong arms, the breath of the desperate male ghosted over his crotch area, as if he needed any encouragement.

Carefully setting down the plate on the bedside table, Will took his time to calm the agitated male that seemed convinced that he would vanish the moment he let go. "Shhhh, it's alright. Everything is alright." Will soothed. "I will not leave. Let's just sit down and grab a bite before we return to bed, alright?"

Compelled to obey the Omega left the bed and only remembered the blanket when Will pointed it out to him. Approaching the two armchairs that stood in front of the cold fireplace

of Hannibal's bedroom the Alpha placed the food on the small table under the window, gesturing for the Omega to take the other chair. "Sit. Let's eat."

Obedient Hannibal sank onto the chair, shivering and avoiding Will's eyes. Still he did not seem to be able to relax. Wondering what was wrong, the empathy watched for a moment, realizing that the doctor was sitting as far at the edge of the chair, as close to Will as the upholstering allowed. Exhaling tiredly Will opened his legs to make room and whispered, "Come."

Immediately the Omega was on the floor, snuggling into the V of Will's legs, contently rubbing his face over the younger man's thigh. Tenderly Will trailed his fingers through sweaty hair, scratching the other man's neck, finally able to calm him. When the doctor was not shivering any more, he reached for the cup and offered it, along with half of the cheese sandwich. Taking the first bite out of Will's hand, later picking up the bread when the Alpha prompted him to do so, the Omega sat contently on the floor, wrapped into a thin blanket, consuming everything that was provided.

But they were only allowed very little downtime. As soon as the first sandwich was consumed, Hannibal started to fidget on the floor obviously the second heat-wave of the day was swiftly approaching. Urging him to consume most of the peanut butter and jam sandwich, Will nudged the doctor towards his bathroom. This would be sudatory, best to make use of the shower as often as the doctor's heat allowed it.

Dragging the comforter off the bed, throwing it into a corner, Will followed the Omega into the shower, soothing the overheated man with trepid water. The brief shower the Alpha had planned turned into a half-an-hour long interlude where Will fucked the doctor against the wall, enjoying the happy sounds the Omega made when his needs were met in a cool surrounding that eased his burning body.

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Memories

Back in bed, the Omega tried his very best to seduce the Alpha once again, but Will was not in his teens anymore and having already come twice today, he knew he would have a hard time to keep up with the Omegas insatiable appetite. So he pushed the doctor on his back, caressing his skin, bringing him to new heights again and again, until he was finally sated enough to find some rest.

At the university Will had found out by accident that he was able to help an Omega without claiming them, something that was a rarity in their world, leaving most Omegas to decide to suffer through their heat alone. He had fucked many people over the years, men and women alike and had learned to satisfy them, even without actual intercourse. Now that the taller man lay huddled into his side, Will's thoughts inevitably returned to the first similar encounter he had had in his mid-twenties.

Will Graham had been a very intelligent, but never a popular student. He was not submissive enough to be seen as an Omega, not social enough to appear as a Beta and surely not dominant enough to reveal his true designation. During his second year he had found a small, timid Omega, huddled into the corner of the public showers in their dorm. Burning up and shivering from need the young woman had hidden in the shower stall farthest from the door. But as soon as she had become aware of him, she had jumped him – quite literally – and had begged him to take her, to mark her, to claim her, as his own.

But Will had known her. Leila Willcox was the daughter of an influential software mogul, studying computer science and business engineering so that she could one day work a top position in the multi-million-dollar enterprise of her father. She was nice, inconspicuous and had kept mostly to herself. Now Will understood why. Unwilling to ruin her future by leaving her alone to be claimed by whoever Alpha came in next, he had wrapped her into a towel and taken her back to his room. He had helped her through her heat, all the while keeping her perspectives in life at the forefront of his mind, so that he would not claim her.

She was gone as soon as her heat had broken and had fled the room afterwards, whenever they had come across each other on campus. Will had never begrudged her these avoidance tactics. The situation was awkward enough for him, how hard had it to be for her? Throwing himself into his studies full force, he had not spared her another thought, until the mid-term-exams had been though.

The first day of mid-term-break Will had returned to his dorm-room, one he didn't have to share, thank god for small favours. There he had found a man in his early thirties studying his evidence wall that was covered with pictures of the victims of the most famous serial-killers this land had suffered from. Everything about this gentleman screamed 'Alpha' but Will had experienced enough bullying from stupid Alphas this entire semester and had looked forward to a month of seclusion since most of the campus was empty during mid-term-break.

So he had straightened and demanded to know, "What are you doing in my room? This is breaking and entering and I will not hesitate to call the campus police if you don't leave

immediately."

Turning around with a smile, letting his gaze wonder over the young man mouthing him off, the gentleman had chuckled, "Quite hostile for someone who doesn't even know why I am here."

Folding his arms defensively, Will had raised his chin. "In my experience designated Alphas only want to assert their position of dominance, prove to those around them how very superior they are. Did you see me in class, in the cafeteria or in the library? Did my 'non dominant' pose irk you so much that you feel the need to teach me how a 'real Alpha' should behave like? Believe me, I have heard it all. I am only looking for some quiet time to catch up with my studies. So please leave. Whatever you have to say, I am not interested!"

"She's right. You *are* different!"

"Who is 'she'?"

Offering his hand, the young man stepped closer to Will. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Sebastian Willcox, Leila Willcox brother."

I needle falling could have been heard between the two man. Slowly Will took the offered hand and shook it, not leaving the young man out of his sight. After a moment's hesitation, Will asked, "What do you want? Leila is perfectly alright."

Nodding in agreement, Sebastian admitted, "Yes she is, thanks to you. We miscalculated, left her vulnerable. If not for you who knew what could have happened? You provided a great service for my sister. I doubt that any other Alpha on this campus would have helped her without claiming her. The question remains: Why didn't you do it and what are you expecting now?"

"I expect nothing? Why should I?"

Shaking his head, the young man straightened his lapels. "Nothing in life comes for free. You have rendered a great to our family by keeping her unclaimed. Surely you expect something in return."

Shaking his head, tired of this stupid conversation, Will sat on the bed, watching the young man claiming his desk-chair. "This is foolish. Leila doesn't want to be mated to me, as little as I want to be mated to her. We shared an intimate time and then both went our ways. I wish she wouldn't flee me every time we are in the same room but I sure as hell will not confront her. She has been through enough. And now I would be really, very grateful if you would leave, so that I can start enjoying my holidays."

The honest smile that head spread on Sebastian's face had made Will uneasy, especially when the young man unexpectedly changed topics. "Do you enjoy living here?"

"What? I … I am a scholarship student. I am lucky to have gotten a room for myself. Why are you asking?"

Rising from his chair, Sebastian Willcox had produced an envelope, placing it on Will's desk before taking his leave. Immediately Will had picked it up, handing it back to him. "I do not want money! I am not a whore to be paid for sexual favours!"

Tiling his head with an impish smile, Willcox had assured him. "That's not money. And if you do not want to speak to a member of my family ever again we will respect that. Have a nice day Mr. Graham."

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As it turned out the envelop had contained documents of a cooperative apartment in Will's name as well as the key for it. When the Alpha had visited, he had found a nice, condo with an open floor plan and two bedrooms. For three weeks he tried to give it back but either the Willcox family denied to take his calls flat out and when he was finally able to talk to Willcox senior the business man had stated in no uncertain terms that the apartment was his to do with as he pleased. To either live there, sell it and enjoy the revenues, or to burn it down. It was his now and nobody cared about it any longer.

So Will had spent the last week of his holidays carrying his things, piece by piece from his dorm room to the apartment that was only five minutes away from campus. When he finally brought over the last piece he felt giddy with joy when the door closed behind him. From now on, he would not have to deal with obnoxious students, bullying Alphas or loud music that kept him from studying.

When the semester had started again, Leila had dared to sit with him though breakfast. They did not become friends, but they shared a table in the cafeteria or in the library on occasion, both minding their own business. Will had been quite happy about this development and had thrown himself back into his studies.

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At the end of his third year, one week into the holidays someone had nearly knocked the door of his condo off his hinges. When Will had opened it, he had found a distressed and shivering Sebastian Willcox at the other side. His clothes and hair had been in disarray and he had nearly fallen over the doorstep. Clutching onto Will who had caught him in the last moment, he whispered desperately, "Please, … please Will, help me."

Wrapping his arms around the shivering man, Will nudged the door close and dragged him into his apartment. Trying to think about what to do, Will realized that he really didn't have a choice. Sebastian Willcox was an Omega, just like his sister and obviously Will Graham was the only Alpha he trusted enough to go to, when in heat.

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Social Etiquette

Will and Hannibal fucked all Saturday. The profiler liked to believe that the psychiatrist could be more creative in bed as he was letting on right now. At the moment his heat left him raw and wanting, desperate to feel an Alpha's cock deep inside, not caring for finesse. Will chuckled when he inspected the claw-marks on his back, after nudging the good doctor out of a cold bath-tub, back into bed.

He had ordered dinner around nine and the other man had been so starved from their activities, that he had mindlessly inhaled every dish he could get his fingers on. Upon deciding on dinner Will had been convinced that a simple pizza would offend Dr. Lecter's usually so sensitive taste-buds. But had not been so sure Tai had been the right choice when he held the doctors head over the toilet where he vomited whole chunks of flesh and vegetables he had gorged down before.

The doctor had been weak like a kitten after parting from his dinner, yet had held Will's ankle in a vice-grip when the empathy had fed him white rice with steamed vegetables. Luckily he had been able to keep them down and after a shower he had barely made it back to bed. His calm breathing assured Will that he could take his time getting the house into order before going to bed himself.

That night he had to wake Hannibal from nightmares, shaking the blabbering man into semi-consciousness, finally having him firmly wrapped around Will's stomach, his head resting on the younger man's belly. Gently carding his fingers through his now dry strands of hair to sooth the Omega, he couldn't help but compare his current lover with his first one.

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After Sebastian's heat he too had avoided Will for several months. The semester had been in full swing when the student had received an e-mail. Sebastian had asked for his permission to stay in the flat for about two months while caring for a business deal in the area. Having a spare bedroom he rarely used, Will had agreed and two days later Willcox Junior had arrived at his doorstep. Embarrassment had radiated off of him in waves and only when the student had invited him in, offering coffee and take-away not addressing the elephant in the room, had he slowly relaxed and met Will's eyes again.

The funny thing about the young man's personality: Sebastian was quite ruthless when on a job. His designation rarely made itself known and over time the two of them had become something akin to friends with benefits. Actually it had been more about the benefits than the friendship, but Will had not minded having another person around – mostly because Sebastian was gone the majority of the day – and regular sex was something he had never been able to have and Will was determined to enjoy it as long as it lasted.

After the deal had been sealed they had parted on amicable terms, Sebastian visiting occasionally, mainly his sister, but had enjoyed his nights, sharing Will's bed during his visits. The following summer, Will had been invited for a boat-trip on the Willcox-family-

yacht. It had been a quite enjoyable stay. Sebastian had taught him how to fish and together with the Leila they had enjoyed days on end out in the open sea. The young woman still rarely spoke to him but she seemed as much at ease around him as around her brother.

The season had come to an end with the traditional party the Willcox family hosted. Though Will felt kind of out of place, he had been grateful that he had allowed the siblings to drag him shopping the week before, since an expensive suit made him stand out a little less between the rich and the famous that made up the guest list.

The evening turned out to be quite entertaining. Will had been introduced to a member of the FBI, a young agent of the behavioural science unit and the two of them had chatted amicably. At least until Leila had caught Will's eye. His female friend had seemed distressed and when he had followed her line of sight, he had found her brother talking to a woman, roughly his age. Still the way Sebastian behaved in front of her didn't sit well with the student.

His friend was consequently avoiding eye-contact. When the young woman touched his arm, he took half a step back, unconsciously wrapping his hands around the middle. He nodded several times as if agreeing with her, but Will could see the distress in Sebastian's posture. Though he broadcasted typical Omega-behaviour, he didn't feel comfortable with the Alpha he was talking to. Excusing himself from the agent's company, Will approached Willcox Senior to inquire about the woman who stood with his son. He was told that she was a potential business partner.

Deciding that this was not the kind of business Sebastian would enjoy, he apologized to the multi-millionaire in advance, leaving him slightly confused, before strolling over to the couple. He allowed his gaze to linger at the woman, before stepping closer behind Sebastian's left shoulder without touching him. He just remained hovering protectively.

When Will didn't leave despite the Alpha repeating request do to so, understanding flared in the female's eyes. Her voice was nasty when she mocked him, "So you are the pet Alpha, Sebastian had told me about. The one he keeps, because he is not strong enough to claim him when he goes into heat."

His friend's anxious, sideways gaze told Will that he had never said such a thing. But Will had dealt with enough venomous Alphas in his life, to not let this woman phase him. Putting a steady hand on the trembling Omegas back, effectively staking a claim on him, Will felt Sebastian calm instantly, smiling at him shyly, before lowering his eyes again. It would need a stronger Omega than Sebastian Willcox to intervene in a fight between two alphas. But instead of staking further claim as was expected in this situation, Will just pondered, "It might be debatable who keeps whom in our arrangement, but let me make one thing crystal clear: He will *never* be yours! No matter if I ever bond with him or not."

When the woman reached for Sebastian to contradict him, a low growl erupted from Will's chest. In a heartbeat the student had stepped up, placing Sebastian behind his right shoulder without even moving him. He scowled at her when she hissed, "You have *no idea* who you are dealing with. I can make sure that you will never, ever find a job in this community little Alpha. You are far out of your league!" Still, Will Graham did not move.

Unexpectedly the member of the FBI, as well as Willcox Senior appeared at his side. The voice of Sebastian's father was calm and friendly when he asked, "Mr. Graham, may I have a word with you?" When the woman smiled at him triumphantly, he continued, "My friend Mr. Crawford, will escort this young lady off the boat."

After a questioning gaze at Sebastian, Will followed his friend's father to his small study. "By antagonizing this young Lady, you have cost me tenths of thousands of dollars today, Mr. Graham. I wanted to let you know that."

Meeting the other man's eyes, Will replied calmly, "Regarding that they would have come at the cost of your son, I would say I have done you a favour!"

With a small smile the multi-millionaire nodded. "Yes, you have, without any doubt. Once again, I find my family in your debt Mr. Graham. Is there anything I can do for you?"

Glaring at the door, Will advised, "Chose your potential business partners with more care." Returning his attention to the older man in front of him, the empathy became aware of how much this scene had demanded from the older man. So he gently added, "Your children adore you Mister Willcox. Both Leila and Sebastian do everything they can to gain your approval. If you will allow Sebastian to choose his business partners himself, I am sure he will not disappoint you. Your son is a brilliant man with an uncanny sense for business."

"You sound smitten. Are you in love with him, Mr. Graham?"

Will shook his head, finally able to breathe easily. "No, as little as he is in love with me. To your children I might be a friend, but most of all I am a convenient partner when their body makes demands they do not want to meet at the moment. Don't worry, I won't interfere with your plans for them. At least not if they feel comfortable with them."

"You have met Jack Crawford?"

"Yes Sir."

"I think you should return to him now. The two of you seem to have a lot in common."

Will had enjoyed the rest of the evening, discussing various topics with the FBI-agent, learning about the bureau, about his units and how he could fit in there. When finally returning to his cabin he had not been surprised to find Sebastian sleeping in his bed. After everything the man had been though, the desire to feel protected and cared for was understandable and Will had simply snuggled up to him, allowing Sebastian to wrap his arms around him, finally succumbing to a deep and undisturbed sleep.

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Hannibal now acted very much like his old friend, yet different at the same time. The good doctor would never allow anybody to come to his defence when in distress. He would never look for help. For an unknown reason Dr. Lecter cherished his independence above

everything else and Will knew that if he would be able to find a clear thought, he would never allow the profiler to see him this weak.

But fortunately, well sadly but luckily for the Alpha, the Omega was so beside himself that his biological needs had claimed the driver's seat. His body took gladly what Will's was offering and demanded more and more with every weave of heat that crashed over him. Will asked himself how the psychiatrist had gone through his heats in the past. Somehow he had problems imagining the doctor with sex toys to quench his basic desires.

Deciding that this was a train of thought for another day, Will pulled the doctor closer, willing his calm and serenity into him, to allow the two of them at least a few hours of uninterrupted sleep. Tomorrow would be the third full day of Hannibal's heat, in Will's opinion the worst of them all. If they were lucky it would be over Sunday night. When satisfied, most heats lasted no longer than three to four days. But if Hannibal had not been with another Alpha for very long, it could be that he had to suffer through seven to ten days, his body finally taking what he had been deprived off for so long.

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A Comfortable Awakening

When warm rays of sunlight coaxed Hannibal into consciousness, the doctor felt a little confused. He found himself in his bed, but not in the same sheets he had put on it last Sunday. Instead of deep-black satin, he was surrounded by cool, grey silk. When sitting up, he found a bottle of water and a covered plate on his nightstand. Warily he lifted the cover, discovering a peanut butter and jelly sandwich underneath. After taking a bite he realized that it was strawberry jam instead of jelly, but he was too hungry to care.

When he tried to rise a weave of dizziness made him stagger. Reaching for the water-bottle he drowned half the contents before fighting his way to his feet. When looking around he found his bedroom perfectly in order. The only thing out of the ordinary were bread-crumbs on the floor between the armchairs in front of his fireplace and a barely noticeable ring of dried liquid on the table between them.

Carefully approaching the bathroom he found it to be empty, as was his living room and his kitchen. Worriedly he inspected his cellar, but the spacious room was vacant as well.

Hannibal barely remembered his last day in the office. He had no recollection of what had happened to him afterwards. Picking up his tablet he found the day to be Monday, and all of his appointments cancelled. Had he called his receptionist, Philisha? He couldn't remember but he had to, since nobody else cared about his patients and the young woman would never make such decisions by herself.

Preparing coffee, Hannibal took stock of his body. He had gone into heat on Thursday; usually he was beside himself for an entire week, most times a week and a half. But now he felt a shiver crawling up his spine. He was cold, instead of feverish. Realizing that he was but-naked he returned to his bedroom to grab his dressing gown, before setting out to prepare a healthy breakfast.

A carton of milk in his hand, Hannibal was reaching for the eggs when his eyes fell on the lung he had cut out of the dreadful singer last Tuesday night. The milk slipped from his fingers, crashing to the floor, spilling over his naked feet when Hannibal remembered. Someone had been here, Friday morning when he had decided to prepare the lung before his heat would overwhelm him.

He remembered the comforting presence of an Alpha. Whispered orders he had been eager to obey. He remembered consoling touches that had guided him and the satisfaction of finally having someone taking him when the burning in his veins threatened to scorch him. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not recall who the person had been.

Yet, it didn't matter. If someone had broken into his house, had forced a bond on him, Hannibal would find him. Find that Alpha and snuff the last breathe out of him, reclaiming his freedom. The thought of being a slave to his biology, to the whims of an unknown person was enough to bring a murdering rage upon the Omega. The eggs he had just grabbed from the fridge flew towards the door of his cooling unit. The knives on his kitchen counter were

brushed off, with one powerful swipe. The board that had been cleaned after he had worked on it, joined the cutlery on the floor, leaving Hannibal to stare at an empty counter, breathing hard.

Only then did the Omega realize that he felt utterly alone. There was no obligatory pull towards an unknown person that was characteristic for a claimed Omega. On the contrary, he felt good, satisfied in a way he had not experienced in many years, maybe forever, since the only Alpha who had ever fucked him during a heat had practically raped him, forcing a bond on him and had paid for with his life. Now his body was satiated, after only three days.

Unavoidably Hannibal tried to find traces of the Alpha who had been with him. But apart from dirty plates in his dish-washer, take-out cartons in his waste-disposal unit and the black bed-sheets neatly hung out for drying in his guest-room his house showed no signs that he had had company. Still, the doctor had lived through many heats alone. He knew that he would have never been able to manage these tasks by himself. The question was: who had been his Good Samaritan and when would he reveal himself and his demands for the services he had provided?

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After making sure that everything was in order Will Graham had left the doctor's house late Monday morning. He wanted to go home, shower and change, relieving Alana of her duties to care for his dogs and his students before heading to the academy.

Luckily the psychiatrist's heat had broken not long after midnight, leaving the two of them with a few hours of restorative sleep. Will tried to imagine Dr. Lecter's face when discovering the PB&J-sandwich he had left for him. But since the profiler had had no chance of knowing when the doctor would wake, scrambled eggs and toast had been out of the question.

After his lecture, Will returned to the headquarter of the behavioural science unit, allowing his colleagues to bring him up to speed on their current case.

Will was well aware that he had already made his decision on what to do with the Chesapeake Ripper. No matter his moral code – his conscience had been frighteningly silent for the last few hours – he felt unable to turn Hannibal Lecter in. The thought of betraying someone he had considered a friend took his breath away and even though he was angry at the doctor – and oh my god, anger did not even remotely cover how he felt due to the doctor's betrayal – he still was unable to bring him to justice.

He didn't even know how to talk to him any longer. Hannibal Lecter had been such a comforting presence in Will's life ever since Jack Crawford had dragged him back to the field. The empath had troubles imagining his world without the doctor in it. He didn't want to

talk to him, not now, maybe not ever again, but the idea of having the chance to, of Hannibal Lecter still being around, only an hour away from Will's home, was comforting.

So Will explained the insight he had gathered at the crime-scene nearly a week earlier, but added nothing new to it. He was protecting Dr. Lecter, without knowing why. If his colleagues or Jack Crawford drew the right conclusions from crime scenes and the most prominent evidence he pointed out, the Ripper would be fair game to them. But the profiler would not share his epiphany with his friends, even though everything he needed to convict the Chesapeake Ripper was a suggestion to Jack to test the set of lungs currently residing in Hannibal Lecter's fridge.

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Will Graham was avoiding him, leaving Hannibal with the undeniable suspicion that it had been the extraordinary young Alpha who had helped him though his heat. But why had he not attended their bi-weekly meetings? They would have had a chance to talk about what had happened.

All though Monday, Hannibal had fought down the anxiety of Jack Crawford hammering against his door, slapping cuffs to his wrists, dragging him to prison. But nothing had happened.

When he had returned to the office on Tuesday, Philisha had confirmed that Will Graham had asked her to reschedule Hannibal's appointments, leaving him with a cramped week to care for all of his patients. But the only person he had been looking forward to see had not come.

On Wednesday he had prepared a delicious dinner for himself, riding the crest of his wave, remembering the voice that had abused classic masterpieces, content that he had silenced it forever. Still he could not savour the meal fully, since he was still worried about the Alpha.

At the end of the week Hannibal Lecter was most anxious to see Will Graham, and angry at himself for feeling so attached to the profiler. Sure, he had had a professional curiosity for the empath in the past. He had enjoyed twisting and turning the thoughts in Will Graham's head, ensuring that he would not suspect Hannibal to be the Chesapeake Ripper.

But now he only wanted to see him, make sure that Will was alright, expressing his gratitude for his services. A part of Hannibal wanted to condemn Will for these feelings, wanted to be convinced that they originated in a bond between the two of them. But the psychiatrist knew that the mating-bond between an Alpha and an Omega would have much stronger consequences than the simple desire to see someone.

An Omega was not complete without his bonded Alpha. The two of them apart was like a physical ache, an ache Hannibal never wanted to feel. He had suffered from it for mere hours after he had been claimed against his will in his youth and while cutting his Alphas throat, he had sworn to himself that this would *never, ever* happen again.

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An Uncomfortable Confrontation

Hannibal felt a little lost when he finally arrived at Wolfs Trap. He had come here assuming that Will would be home, since it was already evening and his classes had ended two hours ago. He had started this journey after seeing his last patient out. But now, facing a dark house, Hannibal debated with himself if he should leave again. He would place the treats he had baked for Will on the veranda, and return another day. But before he could see his decision through, Will's car pulled up the driveway and the Alpha approached the house, so retreating now would be very rude.

His polite, "Good evening, Will." was only answered by a cold look when the profiler passed him by, entering the house without a word. Cursing his own designation, yet unable to overcome it, Hannibal followed, feeling the overwhelming need to appease the angry Alpha. Once inside, the doctor searched the small kitchen unit, finding a plate to arrange his baked goods on, before placing them in the middle of the table.

When he turned towards the Alpha, Will stated in a mocking voice, "What, no meat-pie? I have seen a lovely lunge sitting in your fridge."

Fighting for composure, Hannibal tried to placate his opponent, "Will, my friend, let me I explain, …"

But before he could finish this sentence Will was pushing him against the kitchen counter, glaring up at him with furious eyes, demanding, "Don't you dare. Don't you dare call me your friend when *all* you have done for this last year was manipulating me. We are so far from friendship as the earth is from the sun and now get out. Get out of my house before I do something I might regret."

Within a heartbeat Hannibal was at the door. The Alphas command speaking to a part of him he normally kept under wraps and key, but Will had managed to overcome all of his defences. The empath had addressed the most primordial part of his brain and Hannibal had been helpless to do anything but to obey. He stopped himself short of closing the door, not turning around, only asking into the house, where only the breath of Will and his dogs could be heard. "Then why did you help me?"

With a tired sigh, Will turned, looked at him once again, but Hannibal could not bring himself to turn around and meet the Alphas eyes. With his back to him he could at least pretend to be able to contradict him. So he only heard the soft voice that was so typical for the profiler, supressing the wish that Will would continue to talk to him, despite his disappointment. "If you can't answer this question by yourself after all this time, you really don't know me at all."

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During his journey home, and later when sitting in front of his fireplace, Hannibal felt uncharacteristically confused. He evaluated and re-evaluated everything he knew about Will

Graham. He used his flawless memories to go over every session, every single interaction he had had with the profiler. It was easy for him to find the answer to the question he had asked: The empath could never let anybody suffer if he had the means to help. But Hannibal still couldn't find a reason why the profiler had not turned him in by now.

The knowledge of Will Graham hung like Damocles sword over the Ripper's head. He was reasonably sure, that the profiler would not reveal his murderous identity to Jack Crawford. Usually the doctor would not rely on faith, but with the Alpha he felt unable to do anything else. The only true solution to this situation, the only way to make sure that he was absolutely safe was erasing Will out of the equation. But the thought of hurting him was unbearable. When had things started to become so complicated? When had Hannibal allowed compassion to stand in the way of his personal safety?

The answer to both questions was easy: When he had gotten to know Will Graham.
Now the Chesapeake Ripper found himself in a situation where he depended on the good will of another person, a person that seemed to detest the very sight of him. After a few moments of reflection Hannibal realized that the thought of being detested by Will Graham hurt much more than the idea of being captured by him. He was aware that he would not fight his punishment if the Alpha delivered it, but being despised hurt a part of Hannibal he had long thought gone.

Something had to be done. Words were not an option right now, since the empath was not ready to listen. So the doctor had to come up with another way to regain Will's trust.

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After Hannibal had left Will felt very confused. He looked at the small cakes his guest had provided, deciding what to do with them. He wanted to throw them against the wall, rant about the audacity of the psychiatrist to think that he could placate him with baked goods after manipulating him for so long. On the other hand, the food spoke to Will's designation. Omegas were genetically inclined to provide for their Alpha, something Hannibal Lecter had done right from the beginning of their relationship. The empath hated the thought of having consumed people unknowingly, but the gesture remained the same and cupcakes rarely contained meat.

His dogs seemed to feel the unease of their Alpha, huddling closer when he took the plate to the couch, watching TV while picking though the treats. Will was aware that he could not stay angry with Dr. Lecter indefinitely. His empathy made it necessary to unburden his soul from time to time and from all the people Will had ever talked to, Dr. Lecter had turned out to be the most understanding, the least judgemental when he had started to talk about his intuitive relationship with serial killers. A contemplation that did no longer surprised Will as much as it once had, go figure.

Still, the mere idea of being in the same room with Dr. Lecter forced the young man to fight down the desire to strangle the psychiatrist because he felt so betrayed by him. Had he found out about Dr. Lecter's 'hobby' in different circumstances, Will was not even sure, if he would not have given in to an according desire. He might even have killed the doctor in cold rage. But the helpless situation he had found the Omega in, had spoken to his biology. Unable to let

anybody deal with such pain if he had the means to help, Will had pushed all thoughts of the betrayal form his mind and had helped the psychiatrist though his heat. Now, that he had time to reflect on the situation he was at loss of what to do.

Turning Dr. Lecter in was as impossible as forgiving him. Will needed more time to figure things out. Until then he would leave the good doctor suspended in mid-air, a small revenge for all the months of playing him.

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Hannibal tried his very best to push all thoughts of Will Graham from his mind when attending to his patients. He even decided to make an appointment with his tailor. A new suit for his impeccable wardrobe usually took his mind off matters for a few days. He was sorely disappointed to find his usual tailor going out of business, having been forced to sell his store to a colleague. Needless to say Hannibal was infuriated by the lower quality of the stitching and careless behaviour of the tailor during their fitting.

He would have to do something about this. This particular brand of his suits had stood for high quality and flawless work. Now this new man was damaging the whole brand by working less than perfectly. Taking his time, watching the young man, Hannibal hatched a plan to rid the world of this dishonourable imbecile, who simply didn't deserve the title master tailor.

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Surprises

Will had not heard from Dr. Lecter for more than a month. Relief and unease about this situation were at war in his chest. He had even asked Jack and Alana if they had heard from the doctor, but had avoided their questions why he would not go to see Dr. Lecter for himself.

During mid-term-break he decided that a little fishing-trip was in order to get some quiet time. So he packed his bags full of bait and dog treats and drove away from the city with his little pack huddled into the back of his car. Will needed find some tranquillity to centre himself again. Luckily there had not been any killings for the last month. All psychopaths or sociopaths seemed to restrain themselves, leaving Will alone with his thoughts about a certain doctor who had not approached him after Will had thrown him out of his house.

Will had thoroughly enjoyed a relaxing day in the stream, and smiled at his dogs who all gazed at the pan he shuffled on top of the small camp-fire where he was roasting his catch. He had fed them already, but the delicious smell of fish clearly convinced them that another snack wouldn't hurt. Will set the pan aside when Winston raised his head and whined into the direction of the dark forest that surrounded them.

Since nothing around here should irritate his dogs, Will picked up the gun he had taken with him as precaution, a flash-light and ordered his dogs to follow at heel.

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Hannibal had not believed his luck when he had found his new tailor to entertain a weekend domicile out of town. He had followed him on Friday, watched him all night and the following day and finally caught up with him during his exercise where the tailor broke through the woods that surrounded his home, ignorant of any plants or wildlife he damaged in the process. It took the young man quite some time to spot his pursuer, but he still offered a thrilling chase before Hannibal caught up with him.

He drugged his victim after rendering him unconscious and set to work immediately. Placing him on a fallen log, Hannibal sewed his lips shut, after removing is offending tongue he had only used for mindless chatter during their appointment. So all the man could do when he finally regaining consciousness were pathetic whimpers. The Chesapeake Ripper however didn't let these sounds break his concentration. Carefully he cut off all fingers, meticulously stitching them to the collar of the tailor’s shirt. His needle pierced the cloth precisely, not hurting the sensitive skin that lay underneath. His precise work was a stark contradicting to the clumsy attempts of the tailor a few weeks ago, when he had tried to set the collar of Hannibal's new jacket.

Taking the needles that had offended him during his last visit, Hannibal inserted them carefully into his victim's eyes and the nerve endings of his hands, inflicting as much pain and as little damage as possible. Still the blood-loss of having his fingers cut off finally

caught up with the man and after only two hours the tailor was dead. Regretting of not having more time to introduce the tailor to all the sensitive nerves in his hands he could have used to excel at his job, Hannibal packed his things and turned around to leave. He wasn't prepared to find Will Graham standing at the edge of the clearing surrounded by his dogs who sat patiently by his side.

When the Alpha approached him, Hannibal felt at loss of what to do. Any explanation would sound pathetic to the profiler's ears. So the doctor took the only way out he could think off, sinking to his knees when the enraged Alpha finally stood before him, baring his throat to him. This was the way to encourage a bond between Alphas and Omegas if the Omega decided to make the first step. The presentation one of the most vulnerable points of the human body, encouraging the Alpha to emphasise his dominance was one of the most basic mating rituals.

Never before had Hannibal thought himself willing to bare his throat to another person. But if this was his way out, he would take it. He was reasonably sure that Will Graham wouldn't injure him. Though the Alpha could hurt him severe when attacking his carotid artery, especially as enraged as he was now.

He was taken aback when Will hissed at him, possibly even angrier than before: "How dare you present yourself like this when you don't even understand the gesture?" Forcefully he pulled the doctor to his knees, pushing him away with a furious growl. "I might not be prime Alpha material, but I do *not* deserve to be mocked like this!"

Hannibal could see the fury in the other man's eyes, the tension in his body that barely seemed to contain Will's desire to hit him. Strangely the thought of being hit by the Alpha disturbed the doctor considerably less than his words. Of course he understood the gesture, it was an invitation for another to assert his dominance. And even though he had been manipulating Will to a certain point, how could the empath think that Hannibal thought him unable of meeting such a gesture?

He struggled to put on his indifferent mask when Will demanded. "This will *not* happen again!" Gesturing towards the dead body he continued. "I will never again, reach a crime-scene caused by you, without knowing about it in advance. I do not want to waste my time with your victims. Have I made myself clear?"

Swallowing heavily because honestly, these had been the last words he had expected to hear, Hannibal nodded. "Absolutely. Will, I …"

But before he could say another word, Will raised his hand again. "Don't … just … don't."

Turning around he stated, "I sense a long day ahead of me tomorrow. I will return to my camp now and catch a few hours of sleep. You should return home as well and maybe think about an alibi, can never hurt to have one, even for one of your victims."

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Hannibal felt uncharacteristically confused, when driving home. Today Will had ignored the Ripper killing an innocent victim. Instead of bringing a serial killer to justice, he had demanded from the doctor to be made aware of his prey in advance. That made him guilty by association. Though Hannibal was not sure if he wanted that for the profiler, he knew that he would be unable to disobey the order. Not because the Alpha had compelled him, but because he wanted to see how far Will would go to protect Hannibal's secret.

It also irked him, that the Alpha had dismissed his gesture so easily. It had been the only possible course of action in Hannibal's mind. The doctor still had to wrestle down his pride to kneel before someone, even more to bare his throat. How could the empath suggest that he didn't know the meaning of these actions? He was a psychiatrist, dealt with Omegas on a near daily basis. How dare this Alpha belittle him? Even worse, how dared this Alpha belittle himself?

It became once again clear to Hannibal Lecter that Will Graham had no clue of his own value and strength. If he were open to be approached by other Omegas, the doctor was sure that they would queue to catch the empath's attention. After witnessing a few lectures at the academy, Hannibal was well aware that several Omegas had indeed tried, Will had just not been receptive to their advances.

After returning home, Hannibal cared for the human tongue before going to bed. Still, despite the successful hunt, he was unable to find any sleep. All his life he had cherished his independence and his self-determination. Having an Alpha would change that. His biology would no longer lay dormant, suppressed rigidly whenever it proved inconvenient. Nearly all of his Omega-patients had described the act of obedience as a near euphoric state of mind. No matter what their Alpha demanded of them, disobeying hurt and was not worth the effort. Especially not when the act of obedience was so rewarding.

Hannibal did not allow himself the illusion that he would be able to hold his ground if both Will and his own biology demanded compliance. On the other hand, he really could not see Will Graham executing orders, the doctor would not be willing to heed. Maybe Will's empathy would keep him from exercising too much influence over the psychiatrist’s life. But then, Hannibal was a killer, how could the FBI profiler let this slide?

Still, having his designation dismissed so easily made Hannibal want to prove himself to Will Graham. To prove to the other Alpha that he *was* his friend, that he *did* understand the gesture and that he *was* worth a second chance. But how should he achieve that, when the other man was dismissing him so consequently?

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A Morbid Gesture

Another sick psychopath, claiming to be the reincarnation of Jack the Ripper, had the behavioural science unit on their toes. Even Dr. Lecter had been consulted for advice on this case. It irked Will to work with the Omega, especially because they were not back on speaking terms. But he was well aware that they needed help. Nine young men and women had been kidnapped, raped and killed and they were no closer to finding the bastard than they had been after his fifth victim. Everybody was on edge and who better to see into the mind of a serial killer than the Chesapeake Ripper himself. Though Will withheld that thought.

So the profiler kept his emotions under lock and key and acted professionally, bouncing ideas back and forth with the good doctor, not admitting how good it felt to have someone who could follow his mind-leaps and support his train of thoughts. The feeling of someone who could comprehend instead of looking at him strangely when he talked about a sense of accomplishment on behalf of their killer, was more comforting for the empath than Will was willing to let on.

Still, when Jack smiled towards his and Hannibal's direction, asking them half joking if they had finally made up, Will just briskly brushed him off and left. He didn't need any of them to get into the mind of this killer, it was like an open book to him. But the pickup of his victims was too random for the profiler to be able to foretell where he would find the next one. All Will knew was that they had exactly nine days before another body would turn up.

Hannibal was highly irritated when he left the behavioral science unit mere minutes after Will Graham. All of Will's colleagues had tried to intervene on the profiler's behalf, apologize for his irrational behavior. It didn't even occur to them that the fault might be Hannibal's. They had known Will Graham even before the doctor had met him. How could they think so little of him? It was as if everybody was only using Will's abilities, but nobody was willing to rely to him on a social level. How very narrow-minded of them.

The Chesapeake Ripper had seen more in these killings than he had let on in the FBI-Headquarter. He would have revealed his insight to Will give the chance to talk to the young man privately. But after Will's rude dismissal of Jack's joke, he was sure that the empath would not allow such a conversation.

Maybe the profiler was right, maybe Hannibal did not understand friendship that came without benefits. But in his own right Hannibal was Will's friend. He was determined to proof that. This case was eating at the profiler and Hannibal could not allow that. Maybe intervening on Will's behalf could even the way of his return to the Alpha's good graces. He didn't look too closely at this irrational desire, instead started planning.

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Eight days had passed since Henry Johnson, the last victim of ‘Jack, the Second’ as his colleagues were calling this serial killer, had been found. And they were no closer to narrowing down his hunting grounds. Will, who had just left his dogs free to roam was sorting through his mail, while having a cold beer on his porch. He tried to soak the peaceful atmosphere of his home before the next killing would send his mind into another tail-spin. Between his letters, mostly bills, he found a single sheet of paper with an address written on in red ink. It took Will a few seconds to recognize the handwriting and he had to fight down a snort when he finally discovered the messages meaning.

Returning to the house, fixing himself a sandwich, the profiler closed his eyes and relaxed on his swing while savouring his dinner before the insanity of life would drown him once again. It took Jack an hour to call.

The address turned out to be a gallery in midtown. Upon entering Will noticed the suffocating smell of wet paint, bees-wax and fresh blood. The owner of the gallery, Charles Grimauld was kneeling on the floor in the middle of his exhibition room. His cock had been mutilated and he had died either of shock or from blood-loss since the floor beneath him was sticky with the red liquid. The dead body was arched back, presenting his neck in a near mocking gesture to any Alpha present. What drew Will’s eye was the heart the dead figure seemed to lay at the observer feet. No other organs were missing. No trophies had been taken.

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It was two in the morning when Will finally pulled up in front of Dr. Lecter’s home. He had waited for the preliminary DNA-report, even though he hadn’t needed it to know that Mr. Grimauld was the killer they had been looking for. When he knocked on the psychiatrist's door the doctor opened, impeccably dressed, despite the late hour. Without a word Will entered a house he had avoided ever since the doctor’s heat.

Taking off his jacket, he took the offered seat in front of the open fireplace, looking at the other male calmly. “Alright, I am listening.”

Hannibal was aware that he had but one chance to convince Will of his honesty and determination. So he took his time, carefully choosing his words. He was looking into the flames before turning around, taking in the Alpha posture. The younger man sat relaxed in his armchairs, patiently waiting for him to begin.

“You were right, Will, when you said that I did not understand the gesture, when I bared my throat to you. I also acknowledge that by society’s standards, our relationship might not be considered a friendship.”

“It is very hard to see someone as your friend, who goes such great lengths to manipulate you.” Will’s words were once again spoken in his usual soft tenor instead of with anger.

Hannibal allowed them to wash over him, calm his agitated nerves, before continuing. “I apologize for the pain I have caused you.”

“But not for the manipulation, because you still think it justified.” These words held no accusation; they were mere statements of the obvious.

“Would you believe me, if I assured you that it will not happen again?” Hannibal was still unsure of how to stir this conversation into the desired direction. This Alpha did something to him, his mere presence woke emotions Hannibal had thought long since banished from his mind.

A small chuckle made him turn around, looking at a slightly amused Will who shook his head. “No, because in your mind, everybody is inferior to you. Therefore you think it justified to use people as pawns in your game.”

Taking a deep breath to keep his composure, because Will’s accusation hit far closer to home than Hannibal would have liked, the doctor shook his head, whispering quietly. “Not you Will, never again.”

“Don’t …”

“Please.” It was now Hannibal’s turn to interrupt the Alpha, to explain how Will could *never* be a pawn to him, not after everything he had learned about him, everything they had been though together. “You are right. I manipulate people to my own liking, but you are different. You empathy, the way you use it to plow into the vilest minds and still find your way back into the light. The way you show compassion despite all the darkness you see, makes you stronger than any other Alpha I have ever encountered. You don’t care about asserting a superior position; instead you care for those closest to you, even if they don’t deserve it because they are only using you for their own means.”

“Doesn’t that include you?”

Turning towards the fire again, closing his eyes because he simply didn’t know the right answer to this question. The answer that would make Will believe and grant Hannibal another chance with the Alpha. He was surprised when the velvet voice of the empath caressed him, “Hannibal, come here.”

The Omega didn’t hesitate to cross the distance between them, sinking to his knees between the spread legs of the younger man. He faltered for a mere heartbeat before tilting his head to the side. He swallowed heavily when he felt Will’s warm hand caressing the vulnerable skin at the side of his neck. Still the Alpha was not closing his hands around his throat. He didn’t hurt or harm him, not even a little, so Hannibal whispered, “It is a gesture of trust. I trust you not to harm me, to protect me although I am not yours. But …”

But he couldn’t, couldn’t bring himself to say it, couldn’t hear himself saying something so needy. He had been strong all his life, killed to keep his independence but he didn’t want that any longer. With Will Graham he wanted to belong, but he had long since forgotten how to ask.

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Past and Future

“What has happened, Hannibal?” Warm, gentle hands roamed over the presented skin, eased over the male’s pulse-points, soothed him, even though the doctor was not sure he deserved it. “Who has claimed you without your consent?”

“It doesn’t matter.” The Omega strained not to lean closer, not to touch the Alphas thighs that were spread so invitingly. “It happened long ago and doesn’t concern me any longer.”

Softly caressing the doctor’s hair with his other hand, the empath inquired, “Is he still alive? Is the person who tried to dominate you without your consent still tainting this earth?”

Shaking his head, revelling in the fact that Will had taken the decision from him, that he could only lean closer into the hand on his head or the one on his neck, Hannibal revealed, “I killed him when my heat was over. He never had a chance to assert is control over me.”

Leaning closer, Will’s breath ghosted over Hannibal’s ear. “It’s not about dominance. It's about protection. I can’t protect anybody with a mind as mercurial as mine, nobody but you, who is strong enough on his own. An Omega needs an Alpha to be complete. Like an empath needs an anchor, to ground himself so that he does not get lost in other peoples’ minds.

“We could be what the other needs. But not like we are now. A bond needs to be based on trust. Without it, it’s just a chain that forces two people together.” Pulling back from the man who kneeled between his legs, Will looked into the enticing eyes of the Omega, asking quietly, “Do you trust me?”

Arching back his head, presenting his unprotected throat, Hannibal finally reached for the man in front of him, putting his hands on Will’s hips, pulling them closer together. “I do.”

The next thing the doctor noticed was a searing pain where Will’s teeth dug into his vulnerable throat. But the second the Alpha’s teeth pierced his skin the first tendrils of their bond wormed their way into Hannibal’s mind, erasing all pain, elevating him to a near ecstatic state. He sobbed due to the rightness of the feeling, pulling himself closer until their bodies were fused. Never before in his life had he thought such a thrill of ecstasy possible and now that he had experienced it he knew that he would never let it go.

When Will finally lifted his head, liked Hannibal's blood from his lips and looked into the doctor's eyes, he found them clouded with bliss. But the Alpha waited patiently for the Omega to return to his senses. Nothing about their bond should happen in the heat of the moment. Will wanted Hannibal to be aware of every step of their way.

When the enticing red-brown eyes of the Omega focused on him again, the Alpha whispered, “Now comes the kiss to seal the bond.”

Arching his eyebrows, Hannibal chuckled, “It can hardly be the first time you kiss me. You helped me though my heat after all.”

Gently caressing the wounded throat so the blood wouldn't stain the shirt, Will shook his head. “Kissing is an act of intimacy. I don’t kiss anybody who doesn’t have the chance to pull back if he doesn’t like it.”

“I won’t pull back.” Hannibal groaned in fervour when Will trailed bloody fingers over his lips, eagerly lapping up his own blood before dwelling deep into the Alpha’s mouth as soon as it was offered. He felt their connection completing his mind reaching for his Alpha's intertwining with Will's. Hannibal tasted the faint metallic remnants of blood in Will’s mouth, pulled the Alpha closer until he slid from the chair onto Hannibal’s lap.

Arching back so that he didn’t have to lose the taste of Will’s enticing lips, Hannibal couldn’t supress a whine, when Will clasped his neck and pulled him back. The doctor felt embarrassed, aware that all of his indigent emotions would be transmitted through their bond. He hated feeling weak, feeling needy for anything, but there was no hiding from Will any longer. He had wanted this and now he was overwhelmed with a foreign mind in his own head that saw everything, knew everything, unearthed everything, even the things he wanted to keep to himself.

Still, despite his previous experiences with Alphas who usually used all means to emphasize their dominant position, Will didn’t mention Hannibal’s feelings. Instead he licked up the trail of blood that threatened to soil the doctor’s impeccable dress-shirt and decided, “You will stain your shirt if you keep it on. I think we would both feel much better without any clothing.”

“Of course. Would you follow me please?” Retreating to common courtesy helped Hannibal to get himself under control again, even if he had to fight down the desire to pull the Alpha back into his lap as soon as the young man had risen. Lacing their fingers together, Will allowed Hannibal to lead the way into the doctor’s bath-room, where he demanded from the Omega to undress so that they could care for the wound.

This was the first time that Hannibal experienced the full force of their bond. Because even though Will had uttered the order absent-minded, clearly having thought of the doctor's dress-shirt and not all o his clothes, while rummaging through the cupboard under the sink in search for an first aid kit, the doctor felt blissful after removing the first item of clothing. A bliss that only increased with every item he parted from.

He admitted to himself that he had always thought the Omegas in his office to exaggerate, when they talked about the delight it brought to heed their Alphas commands, despite them knowing that these demands were wrong. Now Hannibal himself stood stark naked in his bathroom, shivering from pleasure simply because he had followed Will’s order.

Will was presented with the impressive proof that his first order had been met and that his Omega had enjoyed heeding it. Shifting slightly on his knees, setting the box with the red cross on the floor, the empath looked up at the other male, slowly tracing the outside of the

other's legs with the tips of his fingers. With a groan Hannibal steadied himself at the counter when Will's breath ghosted over his aching member and couldn't contain a shout when Will licked a long strip from the base of his cock right to the tip.

Oh, how long Will had dreamed about doing this. He had been thoroughly impressed with everything he had seen of Hannibal's body during his heat, but had refrained from touching or tasting. A blowjob might be pleasurable, but it did nothing to ease an Omega's heat. Now, with the connection between the two of them new and exciting, he could feel every raw emotion of his Omega echoing though his head. Will wanted to take his time to savour him, every last drop.

Will had not had many chances in the past to experience something like this, but he knew what he liked it when Hannibal's fingers dug into the counter, knuckles white from the pressure, an undeniable proof that he did a pretty good job. His own erected member strained painfully against the confines of his trousers, but his Omegas arousal was too beautiful to not give it his undivided attention.

When Hannibal finally reached his peak, fingers buried in Will's locks, dragging his Alpha closer while fucking into his mouth, the Omega came with a drawn out groan. As soon as Will had pulled back his lips, Hannibal sank to his knees and kissed him deeply, savouring his own taste on the younger man's lips.

When the post-orgasmic bliss ended, the doctor's eyes flared up and Will was roughly pushed back against the tile-floor. With frantic movements that reminded Will of a caged beast, Hannibal ripped and shed the empath's clothes, until he reach his swollen manhood, swallowing it whole at the first attempt. The Alpha did his very best to keep himself in check, so that he would not arch into his Omega, hurting him unintentionally.

Once Hannibal was sure, that Will would remain pliant, he took his time to devour him. Every patch of skin was touched and tasted, especially his Alpha's cock and every groan and blissful moan resonated though Hannibal's own body. Still, Will did not do anything, simply lay passive on the cold floor, allowing his Omega to satisfy himself. When the empath finally spilled into his mouth, Hannibal came a second time this evening, entirely untouched. His Alpha's passion alone had caused another orgasm and the Omega felt boneless when sinking into the arms of the young man on the floor, snuggling into the embrace.

After a brief clean-up they retreated to the bedroom and for the first time in his life, Hannibal allowed somebody to hold him when falling asleep. He had never felt comfortable with having anybody in his bedroom, feeling too vulnerable when unconscious. Nothing good had ever come to him at night. But with Will he felt protected, even cherished.

"We didn't disinfect your wound. It will scar." The Alpha whispered on an afterthought.

Being well aware of the possible consequences of human salvia in open wounds, Hannibal answered, “That’s what you want, a visible proof of your claim over me. You bit low enough for me to hide the bite with a tie, but you entertain the thought of everybody seeing it when I dress casually.”

Chuckling lowly, Will didn’t deign this comment with an answer. Both knew that the doctor was right. So he merely said, “Good night, Hannibal.”

“Good night, Will.” Before they finally relaxed, well aware that Jack would call in the morning to reveal that the finally DNA-result had come in and that their hunt for ‘Jack, the Second’ was officially over.

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Everyday Life

Though Hannibal was not used to share his bedroom, or bathroom for that matter, he discovered that he didn't mind Will's presence during his morning routine. The low hum the Alpha emitted when shaving, washed over Hannibal, relaxing him more than his hot shower. The wound on his bare neck was still sensitive to the touch it. He was not prepared for the warmth it spread though his body when he touched it, drawing comfort from the knowledge that he was no longer alone. Irritated with the unexpectedly soft feeling Hannibal cleaned it with disinfectant soap before leaving the shower.

Will was just stepping back from the mirror, making room for Hannibal when his eyes fell on the open wound. With a smile he decided, "You should wear a turtleneck today. You look quite handsome in them." before letting his lips brush over the Omega's shoulder before leaving.

Being familiar with kitchen, Will started the coffee machine, before stepping outside to get the newspaper. After gathering a quick overview he settled w7ith the science section and a cup of coffee at the kitchen counter, fighting to keep his expression neutral when Hannibal emerged with an impeccable white dress-shirt and a dark-blue tie, under his dove-grey suit. He should have known better than to suggest any type of clothing, even knowing that one of the Omega's silky-turtle-necks would irritate the doctor's wound far less than the stiff collar of a dress-shirt.

Without acknowledging his Alphas presence, Hannibal took his apron before setting everything out to prepare breakfast. In his dressing-room he had instinctively reached for a petrol turtle-neck, aware that Will liked the colour on him. But then he had pushed it into the back of his closet, angry that he had given in so easily to a mere suggestion from someone who wouldn't even have thought of giving fashion advice the day before. Best to make clear right from the beginning, that he was not a pliant and submissive Omega who followed every small suggestion, just to please his Alpha.

When meticulously preparing scrambled eggs – Will had eaten far too little for the last two months – while rigidly ignoring the pain the stiff collar caused when brushing over his reopening wound. Still, whenever Will raised his head, Hannibal lifted his chin daring the Alpha to address the matter. But Will remained unexpectedly silent.

Hannibal felt far too happy for his own liking, when Will had groaned after the first bite of the dish he set out for him, consuming two more helpings before returning to his house before his mid-day lecture. The way Will had calmly ignored his gesture of resistance had confused Hannibal. His Alpha had just thanked him politely for the breakfast despite the Omega's blunt disobedience.

He instinctively leaned into the soft caress of Will's hand on his back, when the profiler set down his plate and cup next to the sink. He smiled when the younger man gently kissed him, savouring the contact that made his skin tingle. At least before the Alpha whispered into his ear, "If you insist on a dress-shirt pick a dark one. You are bleeding all over this one, my love."

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On his way to the office, Hannibal finally managed to shake off the confusion Will's endearment had caused. Nearly two decades had passed since anybody had given him an honest endearment. Sure, Hannibal had occasionally entertained a lover, male and female alike. But apart from the usual passion fuelled admissions he had never allowed anybody to call him anything else but his name. Will – usually so careful not to cross any boundaries, not to do anything Hannibal did not feel comfortable with, since the situation was new for the both of them – had not even thought about the addressing this morning. The chosen endearment had come from his heart, the bond had shown that. Still Hannibal was unsure of how to deal with it.

He had not allowed anybody close for a very long time. He wanted, no needed Will as his Alpha. Not only because an Omega needed an Alpha to function at his peak. Also because the thought of Will claiming anybody else, of Hannibal being claimed by another, made the doctor feel nauseous.

He couldn't remember his last heat, but Will had told him that he had left his door open. What if Beverly had entered or Jack Crawford? Both were Alphas, strong and composed. But would they have been able to resist him standing naked in his kitchen, exuding hormones that should drive every Alpha in his vicinity crazy with desire?

Will had taken him, but not more than what the Omega would have offered freely without a heat. He had not even stolen a kiss, something the psychiatrist had not thought anybody strong enough. Not when Omegas broadcasted their needs so clearly during a heat-cycle.

Will had called him his friend once upon a time, before shunning him for all the lies and manipulations. Now Hannibal felt the unexplainable need to prove his worth. His designation needed Will to look at him with affection and friendship once again, since he felt uncomfortable of Will calling him 'love' already.

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Jack Crawford called him at his office around three. The agent asked for his input on their latest victim. Though Jack sounded less tense than he had for the last two months, Hannibal knew that the head of the behavioural science unit of the local FBI branch could not let this killing slide as easy as Will. They might have connected the last victim to the former rapes slash murders, but the killer of Charles Grimauld was still out there.

Having just seen his last patient out, Hannibal decided that he had enough time to go home to change, before following Jack's the invitation.

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Not even his most stubborn students had been able to burst the bubble of happiness that surrounded Will today. 'Jack, the Second' would never claim another victim. Hannibal and he were on speaking terms again and they had … oh my god how they had bonded: in every imaginable way.

All day Will recalled the sounds, the smell and the taste of his Omega. He felt regret for the act of defiance he had elicited in the morning. The Alpha hadn't thought more, when suggesting a turtle neck, than it being softer to the sensitive throat of his Omega than the collar of a dress shirt. Still he had provoked Hannibal to prove his independence, leaving him hurting all day. That was exactly the opposite of what he had intended.

Will was aware that he needed to choose his words more carefully from now on. He cared a great deal about Hannibal, not because he was his Omega, his everything, but because he was a strong, beautiful and fascinating man. A man Will wished to know. Maybe, with time, Hannibal would learn to trust him with more than just his body. Maybe, with time, Hannibal would trust him with his mind. Will was looking forward to this day, but was aware that the two of them had a long way to go.

When he entered the behavioural science unit in the afternoon, going over the last murder with his colleagues, he was aware that they all wanted to put little time and effort into solving this. The victim had been a serial killer that had caused all of them many sleepless nights while claiming nine innocent lives.

The relieve in the air was palpable and within the first few minutes, Will had been invited to share a drink with his colleagues in the evening, to celebrate the closure of the case. He had yet to accept the invitation. He wanted to go, but his desire to be with Hannibal was stronger. Still, Will wasn't sure if he was welcome as a permanent guest in the Omega's home.

The members of Hannibal's designation usually didn't handle being alone very well. Being separated from their Alpha was known to cause pain. But Hannibal was not a typical Omega. For all Will knew he cherished his solitude, might only interrupting it on Will's behalf to share a few evenings each week.

The Alpha was aware that he felt quite uneasy when separated from his Omega. But his own discomfort was not important enough for him, to talk to Hannibal about it. At least not for now, if their straining bond would affect him more, he knew that he needed to talk to the doctor. But they had to grow accustomed to what they had now, before making major decisions on their living-situation.

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Old Friends

Still unsure of how 'Jack the Second' had chosen his victims, Will opted to go down to the morgue, to look at the body again once he arrived at the FBI. Towering over the mutilated corpse of Charles Grimauld, Will let the pendulum swing and recalled all previous killings, searching for a pattern. When he mumbled frustrated, "I still can't see the connection between him and his victims," he realized that the morgue was so silent he could hear every person breathing.

Looking up he saw Brian starring open mouthed at something behind Will. When the profiler turned, an honest smile lightened up his face.

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To say that Hannibal enjoyed the stunned silence would be an understatement. He had followed Jacks invitation, leaving on his coat and scarf when the agent brought him up to speed on their latest victim, since they were heading to the morgue. Beverly joined them half way, carrying pictures from her office. During the elevator-ride down, she invited Hannibal to join them on their planned shindig in the evening.

Every member of the behavioural science unit had worked past his usual hours for the last two months. So a little get together for music and drinks sounded like a good idea. Reluctant to agree before consolidating his Alpha, Hannibal made a non-committal noise, asking about the photos instead. They had truly captured the beauty of his work, the doctor noticed satisfied.

A pleasant feeling spread in Hannibal's stomach, when he saw Will, at the examination table. Until now he had not realized how tight he had been wound all day, with him and his Alpha parting ways so soon after their bonding. His hand instinctively reached for the claiming mark on his throat, touching only soft wool. Unwilling to hide a mark any longer, Hannibal casually shed his coat and took off his scarf, offering them to Beverly who had held out her hands invitingly.

Silence spread over the morgue, when the deep-red V-neck he was wearing under his suit revealed a barely scabbed over wound.

"You're … an Omega." Hundred points to Jack for stating the obvious.

Swallowing nervously, Beverly asked, slightly croaking, "Does … does your Alpha know you are here?" A valid worry, since Hannibal, a freshly bonded Omega, was standing in a room with three Alphas and one Beta.

Tilting his head a little, Hannibal brushed off her worries, "Not at the moment, but I assume he will realize soon."

"Maybe it would be best if you left." Beverly suggested. "Sorry, Dr. Lecter, this is nothing personal, but you are newly bonded, no Alpha would enjoy having you in the vicinity of three other Alphas and one Beta who are not family." Alphas tended to be very protective, sometimes even possessive. At times downright violent when the bond was new. More often than not encounters such as this ended in violence.

But Hannibal only smiled unperturbed, stating calmly. "I don't think that will be necessary," before approaching Will.

Flabbergasted the two Alphas looked at the Omega who not only dared to contradict them, but stepped closer to the examination table, to look at their latest victim as if he had no care in the world. They couldn't believe their eyes when Will revealed his frustration about his inability to see a connection that had to be there, but instantly lightened up when his eyes fell on his psychiatrist.

Nobody dared to utter a single word when the Omega stepped up to the Alpha, and lowered his head before him. Will mirrored the gesture by lifting his head while looking over his shoulder. The two of them were close enough to kiss now, but didn't even touch. They only closed their eyes and took a deep, relaxing breath, before turning towards the victim again.

Quietly, Will stated, "I like the colour." Before he returned his attention to the serial killer who lay splayed out before them, repeating his initial frustration, while taking the pictures Beverly offered. "I still don't see the connection. There has to be one, no serial killer choses his victims randomly."

Claiming the place that was common for Omegas, Hannibal stepped behind Will's right shoulder, looking at the pictures. "Have you checked the personal of the Gallery?"

Work seemed to be considered a safe topic, because after a glance towards Will – who ignored him completely – Jack revealed, "Yes, we have checked the entire list of clients and artists, this morning, no matches. Not even in the immediate circle of their families."

"A Gallery needs more than artists and clients to function. Fundraisers are held, openings need catering and exhibits have to be delivered. There are many more people involved than are immediately paid by Mr. Grimauld himself." Hannibal offered his insight.

Nodding slowly, Jack offered a small smile. "That might a good idea."

A low growl from Will, "Of course it is. That's why he is here." propelled the tension in the room though the roof. Apparently Will didn't appreciate his Omega being belittled, not even unintentionally.

Revelling in the implied praise, Hannibal allowed himself a few seconds of delight in the anxiety his Alpha had elicited in his colleagues, before softly touching Will's shoulder. Entirely composed he suggested, "I am sure that Jack merely wanted to point out that my train of thought hadn't occurred to anybody, not belittle me in any way."

"Of course, I would never …"

But before Jack could finish the sentence, Will surprised them all by relaxing again, briefly caressing Hannibal's cheek with the backside of his hand. His words were tender, even adoring when he whispered, "You are brilliant. Jack shouldn't be surprised by that. He was the one submitting your help after all."

For a heartbeat, Hannibal wished that they were alone, that Will would allow him more than a fleeting touch that came with his compliment. The Omega wanted to pull his Alpha closer, feel his warm hand's on his skin, kissing him and wrap around Will. But this was neither the place nor the time for these desires, so he merely tilted his head in appreciation, before looking at the head of the behavioural science unit again.

Obviously Jack realized that Will had offered him a 'carte blanche' for his faux pas. Not willing to stress the situation any further, he repeated the earlier invitation, "We will look into this tomorrow. We all have had a few stressful weeks. Why don't we call it a day and meet around seven in the Blue Hill Tavern, since I assume Hannibal wouldn't cherish an evening in the James Joyce Pub."

Looking at his Alpha, Will seemed indifferent, leaving the choice to him, Hannibal shook his head. "On the contrary, Jack. I enjoy an occasional sandwich from James Joyce's kitchen and can only recommend their Award Winning Beef & Guinness Stew."

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"You let him off the hook too easy!" Will growled in the car once they left. Hannibal had offered to drive him home to change before they enjoyed an evening with their friends.

"He is your superior. What good would it do to antagonize him?" Hannibal asked, entirely composed while secretly enjoying Will's agitation on his behalf.

"Maybe he would learn to think before he talks!"

Reaching for his Alpha, tentatively touching him, since Will still radiated anger, Hannibal caressed the younger man's thigh, to calm him down. He was surprised how easy it was for him to identify Will's emotions through their bond. Calmly Hannibal reminded him, "Jack behaved better than most Alphas would in a similar situation. He is the head of the behavioural science unit of the FBI. He is used to expect the worst from people."

"As should I, after all the minds I have gone though. Still, I understand that nothing has changed about you, designated Omega or not!"

Smiling at his Alpha, Hannibal pulled Will's hand, which had covered his own, to his lips. "You are the most extraordinary man I have ever met, Will. And I consider myself lucky to be

your Omega, no matter how people might look at me from now on."

The overwhelming joy that spread though their bond nearly took Hannibal's breath away. He had not imagined Will reacting so favourable to his words. Yet when he looked at the Alpha, Will merely smiled and whispered, "I am the lucky one."

After a while Will chuckled, "You enjoyed the scene you have caused in the morgue today."

"Greatly." Hannibal admitted, before smiling as well, "Burgundy might become my favourite colour."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Orders

Hannibal had never been particularly good with animals, so when Will's dog's spill out the door and crowd him he stood still, bidding his time to see what they would do. Yet instead of showing signs of mistrust, they circled him eagerly, vying for his attention. They smell of Will on him, he realized belatedly, made them trust him. These animals need to get to know him, the smell of their Alpha was enough for them to accept him as part of their pack.

"Feed them, please. The dog-food is under the sink." Will ordered absent minded, before he disappeared into the bathroom. Hannibal did not think about it when he walked into the tiny excuse for a kitchen. The pleasure from obeying the command spread over him, left him content even with the miniscule task his Alpha had bestowed on him. This was the real danger, he realized, that it felt so very good to obey. Until now Will had chosen his words very carefully, and for the first time the Omega understood how much effort his Alpha was putting into their conversations.

Relaxing on the beaten sofa, he watched the younger man emerging from the bathroom with just a towel around his hip and mussed up hair. Rivulets of water ran over his lower back, when Will opened his wardrobe. The desire to touch, to taste was overwhelming. Will executed so much care, asked for nothing, so he should get something in return. Hannibal used that thought as an excuse to act on his desires when rising from the couch.

The doctor crowded the empath to the wardrobe, buried his face in his Alphas neck, inhaling deeply. Will moaned lowly, tilted his head to give Hannibal more room. He shuddered when Hannibal licked the lingering wetness from his skin. The hot shower had left him awake and sensitive and Hannibal was playing on these sensations expertly. When the doctor was through with Will's neck and shoulders he sank to his knees chasing droplets of water before they could be soaked up by the towel.

The Omega looked up questioningly before opening the towel after Will had sank down on his bed. Hannibal was nearly salivating when Will's erected cock sprang free. With a groan he buried his face in his Alpha's lap, savouring the feeling of being so close to the person his entire world revolved around now. The empath relaxed onto the bed, tenderly trailing his fingers though Hannibal's hair, until the Omega had had enough of the cuddling and his hunger woke again.

The Alpha shouted and nearly lifted off the bed, when Hannibal swallowed him unexpectedly, nearly choking the older man before strong hands on his hips pinned him down. Never in his life had the Omega ever tasted something as delicious as his Alphas arousal. He could grow addicted to it, maybe he already was.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

When sentient speech returned to him some time later, Will chuckled lowly, and once again carded his fingers though the soft hair of his Omega, who now lied curled up on the bed, head resting on his Alpha's thighs. "Please don't take this the wrong way for this was overwhelming in the best possible way, but what was that for?"

"You ordered me to feed your dogs." Hannibal answered, analysing the feeling of Will's skin under his fingertips, drawing unseen patterns over the prominent hip-bones. His Alpha was entirely too thin, a situation Hannibal was determined to correct.

Rising to his elbows so that he would look into his Omega's eyes, Will apologized. "I didn't think about it. I know you hate being ordered around."

Looking up, Hannibal smiled because his Alpha was the first, the only one who could see him so clearly, anticipating his preferences and aversions without having to ask. "It was the first, true order you gave, and only because you didn't think about it."

Understanding dawned in Will's eyes he relaxed again, resuming the gentle caresses of Hannibal's scalp.

Hannibal wished they could stay like this all evening, all week, forever … He couldn't remember ever feeling so content, so cherished and understood. He was entirely aware that there were a lot of things he and Will had to discuss, their living arrangements being the first of many. But for now he was content to just be. Be nothing but himself without the need to hide anything, not his designation, nor his 'hobby'. Will knew it all and had still chosen to be with him.

"I am sorry that I mentioned the turtle-neck this morning."

Kissing his Alpha's hip, Hannibal rose and approached the wardrobe, rummaging through it, "No apologies are necessary, Will. You made a sensible suggestion with my best interest in mind. It is not your fault that I felt the need to proof my independence at my own inconvenience." He hated this, hated to admit that he had behaved irrational, that his fear of being under someone's shoe had made him act childish and, as a consequence, ruined a perfectly good shirt. He forced his fingers to relax, straightening a t-shirt he had fisted in his irritation.

Will's fingers, spreading over his hand, made him turn around. Even with Will standing naked beside him, Hannibal still mostly clothed, the Omega still felt the need to lower his eyes before his Alpha. Only Will's gentle fingers made him look up again and he was rewarded with a tender kiss. His Alpha's voice was kind and caring and Hannibal allowed it to wash over him and ease his agitation. "But it was, Hannibal. You are entirely transparent to me. The minute I mentioned it I was aware that I had done you no good, that I had provoked your contradictoriness. That's not what I wanted and I am sorry for it."

Hannibal pulled away harshly. He was aware that Will was right. But that did not mean he liked it. The thought of not being able to keep his private thoughts private any longer was something Hannibal detested. So the Omega snapped harshly. "You would have caught the Ripper much sooner if that were true."

When several dogs came to him, whining lowly because of his distress, he roughly pulled his hands away from their dotting noses and left the house.

He stood at the front porch, staring blindly at the open fields around Will's home. His emotions were at war. His designation demanded from him to turn around, to apologise to his Alpha and make amends. But his need for independence, for protecting himself made him clench his teeth and fold his arms in front of his chest so that he would not reach for the door.

He had lived for more than thirty years without another person in his life, he didn't need anybody to understand him, was perfectly content with his life as it was. Only … he wasn’t and right now with the knowledge of having shunned his own Alpha, the desire to make amends threatened to drown him.

He didn't turn around when the door opened. Didn't react to the dogs shooting past him, at Will's encouraging whistle. He didn't turn around when he felt his Alpha leaving the house. But as opposed to his expectations, Will didn't approach him, aware that Hannibal would not be able to tolerate his touch right now.

Instead the Alpha leaned against the support-beam, mirroring Hannibal's position with the only difference that he didn't seem agitated because of the scene Hannibal had caused. Any 'normal' Alpha would scold his Omega quite harshly right now, demand a sign of submission, an apology. But Will just stood there, watching his dogs.

Will's words were barely audible when he finally spoke. He didn't even look at Hannibal, as if his message was meant for the world in general rather than for his Omega. "I will not hurt you, Hannibal. No matter what I know, no matter what I see, I would rather hurt myself than harm you in any way. I hope you know that now and will be able to believe it someday."

After a heartbeat the Alpha pulled back and turned to enter the house again.

"Will, I …" Hannibal didn't know what to do, what to say to make this right. All his adult life he had relied on nobody but himself, had valued nobodies opinion over his own. But with Will Graham things had begun to change. He had taken an instant liking in the nervous and jittery Alpha. He had enjoyed their game but had abandoned it, when he had realized that he was seriously harming the man. He might have chosen him as his Alpha even then, without really knowing it.

And now, despite deserving so much better than an Omega who choked on his own words, Will offered his hand, pulled Hannibal against his him. One of Will's gentle hand's reached for his neck, the other rested the small of his back, warm and entirely undemanding and Hannibal could only burry his face in Will's neck, whispering ashamed, "I am sorry."

A gentle kiss on his shoulder, and his Alphas emotions seeping through their bond convinced him that it was true when Will assured him, "It's alright.”

"You are a very indulgent, Will. You have the right to expect appropriate behaviour from me."

"You have behaved appropriately at head-quarters today, at least from my point of view." Will chuckled lowly. "You should feel at ease around me, Hannibal. If you can't be yourself with me, where can you be? Our situation is unconventional; it demands indulgence from the both of us. You are an extraordinary man, and deserve to be treated as such. I am proud that you have chosen me as your Alpha. I have never thought anybody would deem me a worthy mate. Not with my proclivity to emotional instability."

Pulling back now, irritated that his Alpha thought so little of himself, Hannibal took the younger man's face between his hand's and kissed him reverently. Touching their foreheads, sharing the same breath he assured Will, "You are the most amazing man I have ever met. Your mind fascinates me to no end and your emotions entice me day after day. There is no one in this world I would rather belong to than you. Despite you caring for your dogs more than you care for yourself. But I guess that is something I will have to remedy in the future."

Revelling in the closeness Will still had to laugh at Hannibal's accusation. "What makes you say that?"

"The fact that you have about fifty pounds of dog-food in your kitchen but only three slices of sandwich and half a glass of jam in your fridge? Apart from half a dozen batteries. Also the fact that you stand on your front porch at barely ten degrees Celsius with only dark-blue jeans and an undershirt."

"Well, you have not lain anything else out for me until now." Will teased.

Smiling that his Alpha was willing to allow Hannibal to dress him, the Omega ducked his head, intertwining their fingers before entering the house again. "Well, we will see to that first. I'm afraid the state of the room you so fondly call your kitchen will need a little more of my time until I can deem it suitable."

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An Evening Out

Hannibal felt Will's unease when many heads turned towards him when they entered the James Joyce Pub. The Omega nudged him forward, proud of how good his Alpha looked in dark slacks and a white button-down. Will had this irritating fondness of patterned flannel shirts. But the simple white dress-shirt really did him justice. Their drive to and from Wolfs Trap had taken a while so it was a little after seven when they arrived. Yet the members of their elusive group had just gathered at the bar and were currently ordering drinks.

Will's clothes earned a wolf-whistle from Beverly and his cheeks reddened most adorably when he asked, "Do you want to look for a seat while I order the beer?"

Not entirely convinced on his Alpha's choice of beverage, Hannibal raised his eyebrows. But Will only smiled and reminded him, "When in a pub …"

"… drink with the Irish. Alright, I yield." The doctor adapted the saying and went to look for a suitable table.

When the others arrived he was currently arranging high-chairs for them, sighing when he placed the last one at distance from the main table. Omegas were not supposed to join the tables of their Alphas. There were usually, slightly lower tables, prepared for them. Though everybody assured that this were not supposed to be a discriminating gesture, Omega's simply were smaller by nature, it still felt degrading.

Will however took the decision of where Hannibal should sit, from him by claiming the chair Hannibal was holding, sitting down close to Beverly while reaching for his phone. The others simply circled the table, peeking on Will's phone as well. So his Alpha laid it in the middle of the table after starting a video und pulled the last chair between his legs, demonstrating off-handed that he would not have Hannibal seated apart from the others.

After picking up on Will's ease the others ignored social boundaries of how Omega's 'should' behave and when the food arrived Hannibal was included into their conversations and bickering just like before. The only difference between this evening and several others he had enjoyed in Jack and his team's company was that Will was touching him constantly. Be it a hand on his lower back, a brush over his thigh or their legs pressed together when they ate.

Hannibal found that he liked this closeness. He had never considered himself a particularly tactile person, despite his desire to consume his victims. But with his Alpha, he had to fight the desire to push his stool even closer, ignoring that it would make eating harder for the both of them. He couldn't imagine that Will would mind.

When he informed Will that he was about to use the facilities, informing him, not asking permission, never asking permission for something like that, his Alpha just nodded but didn't even look at him, currently too wrapped up in the construction of an origami flower Beverly was folding from the daily menu.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Hannibal moved to the side instinctively, when a slightly drunken Alpha approached the washbasin. He felt disgusted, when the burly man sniffed the air demonstratively and turned towards him.

“Aren’t you a gorgeous thing?” He slurred, stepping closer. “And newly claimed too. I’m surprised that your Alpha lets you out of his sight.”

Starring down into the Alpha’s eyes, Hannibal stated defiantly, “My Alpha trusts me enough so that he doesn’t feel the need to monitor me.” Trying to step around the other man, Hannibal said, “Now excuse me.”

When a sweaty hand wrapped around his naked wrist, the doctor froze, when the other pulled him back. “Defiant little shit, apparently you have not been broken in yet. I could do your Alpha a favour and teach you a lesson.” When the man reached for his throat to enclose it with his fingers, something in Hannibal snapped. He knew that he was supposed to act pliant and submissive, but the mere thought that this despicable creature touching the mark Will had left on his skin made bile rise in his throat.

Hannibal had not been gone more than two minutes, when a pained sound echoed from the bathroom. Brian, the only beta in the group, instantly was on his feet, looking around to spot the Omega before asking Will, “Who was that? Where is …”

With a frustrated sigh Will cut him short, “I don’t know who this was. I can only tell you that it was not Hannibal we have just heard. Please, excuse me.”

When Will entered the men’s bathroom he felt a weave of cold fury washing over him. Hannibal was currently securing a reeking, apparently intoxicated Alpha on the floor. Aware that he could not act on the feelings that arose in him at that picture, Will just stepped around them and used the facilities. The man on the floor started to brag, “You have to help me, this insane Omega attacked me. Get this unrestrained beast off of me.”

After washing his hands, Will crouched down on the floor next to the man’s face. In a composed voice he pondered, “My Omega, is one of the most restrained persons I have known all my life. I am sure he will let you go if you offer a sincere apology for any offence you have offered.”

Tilting his head, inspecting the Alpha closer, Will threatened. “I will give you three minutes. Then I will notify your friends who are drinking by the front window, about the situation you find yourself in. I doubt that it will improve your reputation if they find you in this position.” Before the Alpha could answer, Will rose, gently caressed Hannibal’s cheek and kissed his hair, before leaving the bathroom.

Outside he went straight to the bar and ordered a double-shot of whiskey.

Never before had Hannibal felt so pleasantly surprised. He was aware of how this looked, a rogue Omega not showing the proper respect to an Alpha. But Will had only come looking for him and had not intervened on his behalf apart from speeding up the process. He had not condemned Hannibal's behaviour, had acted like his Omega defending himself was the most natural thing in the world. When the Alpha babbled his apology half a minute later, Hannibal let him go and went looking for Will.

He found his Alpha at the bar and when he concentrated on their bond, he realized that cold fury rose in tidal waves through Will. Dread pooling in his stomach, Hannibal debated with himself if he should approach him, when he saw the younger man drowning a glass of whiskey, ordering another. Aware that Will was not used to considerable amounts of strong alcoholic beverages, Hannibal realized that he had to apologize for his behaviour since Will would poison himself if he kept this up.

Trying to reach for Will's shoulder, Hannibal bounced back when his Alpha flinched away from him. "Don't …" Will hissed. "Don't touch me." His nostrils were flaring when he looked at his Omega with barely restrained fury in his eyes and ordered, "Go and wash your hands!"

Walking back towards the bathroom rigidly, Hannibal looked at his reflection, noticing the desperate look in his eyes, while following his Alpha's order. Taking a deep breath, the doctor allowed anger to fill him to drown out the anguish. How dared his Alpha be angry with him? How dared he berate Hannibal for defending himself against unwanted attention? For Will, Hannibal had tried to fulfil all social expectations. But he would not make himself vulnerable by downplaying his abilities!

When he returned to the bar, the psychiatrist was ready to defend his right of self-determination. His Alpha however surprised him, by reaching for his hands, bringing them to his face, inhaling deeply. After feverishly placing several open-mouthed kisses to them, Will shuddered and relaxed considerably. At loss of what this was supposed to mean, Hannibal sank onto the barstool next to Will and looked at his Alpha. This was not the behaviour of an Alpha who was furious with his Omega, even though Hannibal could still feel Will's anger.

The second whiskey still stood on the bar untouched and after a deep breath, Will reached for Hannibal's neck and pulled him closer. His words were a growl from the depth of his throat when he declared, "You are mine and nobody else is to touch you!" before fusing their lips together in a demanding, near brutal kiss. He plugged into the depth of Hannibal's mouth as if he could erase all lingering memories of the other Alpha this way.

Overwhelmed by such a display of possessiveness, Hannibal slid as close as he could, pressing himself against Will's smaller body, calming his Alpha though sheer proximity once he realized that the fury was not directed at him. When Will let go of him, a collective exhale from their table could be heard. They all knew that there were very few things more dangerous on this planet than a freshly bonded Alpha. These things were usually called hurricane or tornado.

Putting their foreheads together so that they could share one breath, Will whispered, "Talk to me Hannibal. Tell me something, anything, or I will go over there and shot this jerk for daring to lay his filthy hands on you."

Playing at Will's instincts, Hannibal bent down and rubbed his forehead over the crook in Will's neck in a classic gesture of submission. His neck, his back, everything was his Alphas to protect and he could already feel Will's heartbeat slowing. Lowly he murmured, "Though I would be enticed by such a public display of violence on my behalf, I would suggest that you put your faith in me that I am able to defend myself before anything unwanted happens."

"I do." Will had straightened again, and taken Hannibal's face into his hands. Placing a cherishing kiss on his lips, his Alpha assured him, "I have faith in you, but my instincts are hard to rein in. Let's just be grateful that nothing happened."

"Nothing but a sprained wrist. Shall we return to our friends?"

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Unexpected Problems

For the next two weeks Will rearranged his schedule so that he could spent as much time as possible with Hannibal. It was no particular hardship to sleep in the gorgeous, spacious manor his Omega called home. But after the oppressive decor, he was glad to return to Wolfs Trap in the morning. To spend his days grading papers, playing with his dogs, enjoying the solitude before seeing to his lectures and returning to Hannibal's home in the evening.

Every evening Hannibal offered an opulent meal. Will had come to enjoy the times when Hannibal was busy in his kitchen. The Omega radiated contentment when he was copping vegetables, seasoning meat or peeling fruits. Relaxing in a comfortable armchair Hannibal had placed in his kitchen specifically for Will, he was reading the paper, educated himself on new forensic methods or saw to his paperwork.

When entering such a quiet scene, some people might think the two of them were ill at ease. An Omega entertaining a hobby by himself despite his Alpha being in the same room. An Alpha punishing his Omega with ignorance because of it. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Will enjoyed watching Hannibal working in the kitchen. His movements had a unique grace when he reached for food or seasoning, stirred boiling pants and the fire of a flambé reflecting on his face gave the Omega a near ethereal quality in Will's eyes.

Hannibal felt very much the same. Seeing his Alpha in his kitchen, comfortable in these unfamiliar surroundings made him feel contented. Will had as much fun helping the doctor chopping nuts or peeling green beans, as he had tasting his compositions and never was short on praise for Hannibal's most recent masterpiece when it was served.

Neither of the two felt the need to fill the air between them with useless chatter. Hannibal enjoyed classic music that went best with his dish. Will, preferring solitude and quiet, but found that he didn't mind the music if it was not too loud. He had even asked Hannibal once to play for him after a particularly extensive dinner and had happily dozed off in a chair, during this entertainment.

It still amazed Hannibal to no end how relaxed Will was around him. He had done horrible things to his Alpha in the past, had lied to him and played him. He was a killer, took from those who were undeserving and consumed their meat. But despite that, his Alpha lay huddled on the sofa, relaxed and at ease around him.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Yet this peace could not last forever and when a new serial killer kept the FBI and Will on his toes, their nights together became more irregular. Will still slept in town. But now it could be eleven, or three in the morning when he slipped into bed beside his Omega, something that irritated Hannibal greatly.

When working two nights in a row, with only a brief nap on the couch in the FBI-headquarters, Will went home to get as many hours of uninterrupted sleep as possible, before a new victim would be found. It had been two so far and there was no pattern for Will to see and that kept the profiler up around the clock.

When Will entered Hannibal's office the next evening, he found his Omega pale and with barely concealed circles under his eyes. Unaccustomed to the doctor looking anything but flawless, Will instantly worried. "What is wrong? You look like you haven't slept in days."

Reaching for the bar, preparing a drink for his partner, Hannibal just brushed off Will's concern. "Everything is alright, Will. There is no need for you to concern yourself." Handing over his drink, the doctor retreated to his desk to sort through some papers.

"Hannibal?" Will's velvet voice let the underlying steel show through, sending shivers down Hannibal's spine. After half a week of abstinence he couldn't believe that he had forgotten how much Will's voice was able to affect him. "I would like for you to look at me and tell me why you just felt the need to lie to me."

It was softly spoken, oh so soft, so that the words of his Alpha were mere caresses on his skin, smoothing his ruffled feathers, but still there was no doubt about them demanding compliance. Hannibal already felt the desire to obey, the pleasure lingering just at the edge of his mind, tempting him to just give in. His stomach clenched painfully when he didn't answer. Still he didn't want to. Didn't want to admit how very much his Alphas absence had affected him after a mere month into their bond.

He was preparing himself for the lingering pain his resistance would cause him. It was not bad since Will had formulated his order quite softly. Hannibal was just not giving in so he the compulsion of his biology was manageable.

What he didn't count on was Will approaching him instead of waiting for his Omega to come to him. A soft touch of his Alpha's palm against his cheek and Hannibal was defeated. It felt so good, so right to nuzzle into the soft palm. The caress dispelled all unease that had spread though his body, silenced the yearning inside of Hannibal's chest that had gotten louder and louder with each hour he had not been in Will's presence. To the Omega his Alpha's touch was like food after weeks of starvation.

But Hannibal was stronger than that. He had lived decades without this. He didn't need the comfort of an Alpha to function. He was the master of his own fate. But Will's concern washed away his resistance, calming his unruly emotions and his Alphas silent words undid him when he pleaded, "Don't shut me out. I can feel your pain, no matter if you give into it or lock it away. We are bonded now, whatever concerns you, concerns me as well. Please Hannibal, talk to me."

"You worked for the last two nights, then returned home to sleep there today."

"Yes, I didn't want to bother you at six in the morning when you have patients all day." Will nodded, not understanding where this was going, but relieved that Hannibal was finally

talking to him.

From behind clenched teeth the Omega admitted, “I have not seen you for the last three days. My biology has gotten the better of me. But knowing that you have a job to do, it would be irrational of me to condemn your absence.”

“Have you slept at all during the last two nights?”

Pulling away, despite hurting himself even more with it, Hannibal replied drily. “An average person can’t function sensible when going without sleep for more than thirty-six hours.”

Smiling a little despite the gravity of the situation, Will reminded the both of them, “Well, but you are not exactly the average person, are you? Why didn’t you come to me, Hannibal?”

“As I said, you were working, so what good would it have done?”

“No, I don’t mean to me but to my house. You know where I live and you know that you are always welcome. Being surrounded by my things, my smell would have helped. You know that.”

“I am not …” He was not! Hannibal was *not* weak and needy. Someone who could not function properly if he didn’t see or hear or smelled his Alpha every few hours. He knew from experience that the most Alpha-Omega-pairings worked best if they had breakfast, lunch and dinner together. He had already proven his independence by keeping his job, and Will coming back to him at irregular hours.

He didn’t need his Alpha around constantly. He could very well live by himself! Will could come and go as he pleased without Hannibal following him around like one of his stray dogs. That was perfectly rational behaviour. His Alpha pulled him from his musings by repeating softly, “You know you are always welcome at my house, don’t you?”

“I’m …” When looking into Will’s infinitely sad eyes, Hannibal felt unable to utter another meaningless nicety just to keep up the façade. Stepping up to Will again, allowing the Alpha to hug him, give him the contact he had so direly missed for the last few days, Hannibal soaked up these affections like a starving man, before whispering, “I do now.”

When Will kissed his forehead, Hannibal felt ashamed of having admitted defeat so easily. But he had not been able to keep up his indifferent pretence any longer. A part of him wondered how long Will would keep up with a contradictory being like himself. Sooner or later the Alpha would get sick of his weaknesses, like most Alphas did and then …

Hannibal closed his eyes, trying to push away a past that started to linger like a shadow over his relationship and was surprised when Will demanded, “Alright, now that we have asserted that, I need your help.”

“My help?” The doctor asked confused. After everything that had just happened, he had not thought Will entertaining the idea that he might be of any use to him, not in his current state.

“I need you to anchor me. Whenever I try to get into this new killers head everything goes blurry and I can’t find back to myself again and distinguish between him and me. Your strength had always helped me.” Will explained.

Nodding Hannibal went over to the couch, *the couch*. Green with everything about it screaming ‘Sigmund Freud’, he had bought this particular piece more as a kind of joke. Now he relaxed against the soft leather, opening his arms for his Alpha. When Will relaxed against his chest he felt him slipping away. The pendulum was swinging and Hannibal was the only thing anchoring Will to reality and after three days of growing unease, happy to just be.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Humiliation

Will had both upgraded the couch in his office and his bed in Wolfs Trap. Hannibal had not mentioned it, had not even addressed his Alpha when he had entered the FBI-headquarters at one in the morning, finding the profiler behind his desk, going over autopsy-reports, landmarks of the area surrounding their latest crime-scene and photos from their last victims. The psychiatrist had just put down a small bag and lain down on the couch.

He had had this stupid Alpha flirting with him all afternoon, ignorant to his deflection. Every part of him had yearned for Will, who was neither loud, nor obnoxious. Who didn't have the tendency to dress in clashing colours – not that the extent of his wardrobe would allow that – and never, ever invaded other peoples' private lives if it was not for his job. When he hadn't been home around midnight, Hannibal had finally given in. Now, laying on the couch in the FBI-headquarters, hearing Will's soft breath, inhaling his scent that clung to pretty much everything in this room, tranquillity washed over him and he was finally able to take a liberating breath.

He only opened his eyes once, when he felt a soft plaid being spread over him. Instinctively he reached for his Alpha's hand and when Will caressed his cheek he pressed into it. For several moments the younger man allowed Hannibal to savour their contact before he kissed him on the forehead, returning to his work. When the Omega woke in the morning, he found himself with his arms full of Alpha. At some point during the night Will must have joined him and so the doctor felt relaxed and refreshed after only five hours of sleep.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

There was a certain milestone in every Alpha-Omega relationship that was deemed very important. Statistically speaking, most pairings broke their bond between the second and the fifth month if they were incompatible. Entertaining a relationship for half a year was thought to be significant and Alphas tended to give a 'collar' their Omegas as an anniversary present. Neither Will nor Hannibal had talked about this. Their lives had settled into a steady rhythm but the two hadn't talked about making their arrangement permanent.

Hannibal found himself to be ambivalent regarding that matter. On the one hand, his every instinct demanded form him to wear a visible proof of belonging to his alpha. The wound at his throat had scarred only minor, but was not more than a white ring of skin above the hollow of his throat. On the other hand, being collared like a dog really didn't sit well with the doctor. Until now he had still not needed to broach the issue of his biology with his patients. Wearing dress-shirts and ties hid his mark well enough.

His conflicting feelings found an outlet during a dinner-party he entertained. Will had told him how marvellous his cooking had looked for the last two days of preparation. And though Hannibal tried not to let his Alpha's praise go to his head, he had not been able to quench the glowing pride in his chest completely. So he was quite content when entertaining his sophisticated guests that evening. His Alpha had even found someone to talk to beside his

colleagues. Everything seemed to be perfect. At least until Beverly Katz asked him teasingly what he was planning for the next week for his and Will's anniversary.

Aware that they still hadn't talked about this, Hannibal gave an inexpressive answer, before excusing himself. Retreating to the second floor. He was well aware that his Alpha still had to mention this anniversary, so the Omega felt quite out of his depth. Was Will even planning to make their arrangement permanent? Apart from making clear that Hannibal was not to be touched by other Alphas two days into their bonding, he had never shown any signs of jealousy or possessiveness. Did he even want Hannibal by his side for the rest of their lives, or was this but a convenient arrangement for him with Hannibal serving as his emotional anchor for his empathy and in return he offered his strength as an Alpha?

When Hannibal found Will smiling down at a timid little Omega at the buffet, he felt hot spikes of jealousy piercing his gut. Letting his eyes wander he found an old friend. A female, Alpha friend! Determined to test the boundaries of their relationship Hannibal straightened his labels and approached her.

For the next hour he was smiling, joking and even flirting with the other Alpha. They had not seen each other in years, so Hannibal was reasonably sure that she didn't know about his recently revealed designation. He knew his friend to have more class than flirting with a bonded Omega, so he used her obliviousness for his own purpose. When he leaned closer in a clearly intimate posture, he heard a sub-guttural growl from behind. Ignoring it purposefully, Hannibal closed the last of the distance between him and his friend for a kiss to her cheek.

A furious snarl silenced the entire room. When Hannibal turned around he found Will, standing not five feet behind him. The empath was visibly shaking with the effort of restraining himself, his hand lay at his belt indicating that he would have liked to draw the weapon he was not carrying at the moment. Will's fury washed over him so strongly that it took Hannibal's breath away for a moment and for a single heartbeat he felt heart-wrenching pain from Will through their bond, before the Alpha tamped it down vigorously.

Yet before Hannibal could approach him or say something, Beverly was touching Will's shoulder and the Alpha turned and left the house, his colleague on his heels.

Belated did Hannibal realize that Jack had stirred him into his bureau, placing the trembling Omega in his desk chair. Well, all things considered Hannibal was ready to admit that he had discovered what he had wanted to know. Will was jealous, wanted him so much for him that Hannibal kissing another, even on the cheek, was evoking a murderous fury. But as a consequence of the actions that had led to this realization, Will Graham had pulled back from their bond so that he was nearly non-existing in Hannibal's mind.

Until now the Omega had not even noticed how much he had gotten used to the permanent presence of his Alpha at the back of his head. How much comfort and strength he had drawn from it. When Jack Crawford crouched down before him, offering him a beverage, Hannibal simply shook his head.

When he saw his friend's inquiring gaze he admitted brokenly, "He never mentioned our six month anniversary." The Alpha that led the behavioural science unit would have gotten to the bottom of this sooner or later. Hannibal was not in a state of mind where he could resist such an inquiry at the moment. The implied insecurities were out there, in the open for his friend to see. Still, Hannibal couldn't bring himself to admit to them.

With a deep sigh, Jack rose to his feet. Putting a strong hand on Hannibal's shoulder, anchoring him for the moment "No, he didn't. When he finally found what he was looking for, something that would suit the both of you, he had it made and even paid extra so that it would be delivered in time. I didn't occur to him that you could doubt that."

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For five days Hannibal suffered the foolishness of his actions. Jack had played substitute host for the rest of the evening and Hannibal had received the obligatory e-mails where his guests were thanking him for the delicious meals and the extraordinary evening, very loudly neglecting to mention the scene he had caused. In his circles, that simply wasn't done. Yet the doctor honestly couldn't care less since the only person he wanted to talk to ignore his e-mails and didn't take his calls.

After day three Hannibal had swallowed his pride and had called Beverly to intervene on his behalf. It hadn't worked well. After accepting the phone from his colleague and hearing his Omega on the line, Will had plunged it into some kind of liquid, effectively killing the call.

So Hannibal passed his days in a blur, faked interest for his patients, but drunk himself into oblivion after the second day so that he could get at least a few hours of sleep at night. At the eve of their six-month-anniversary he could not cope any longer. Calling Jack he discovered that a dead body had been found recently and that neither Jack Crawford nor any other member of his team had time to interfere on Hannibal's behalf right now.

Determined to make this right, Hannibal picked up his coat and left for the crime scene. Forensics were desperately trying to cover the most of it, so that the pouring rain would not wash away the last of the evidence. A young man had been found hanging from a tree in his back garden. When Hannibal saw his Alpha, ducked under an umbrella, he called out for him.

Will's eyes blazed with anger when he walked over in purposeful strides. Weakened from their lack of contact, Hannibal had to fight not to retreat. He couldn't keep himself from flinching when his enraged Alpha entered his personal space. "Please, Will, it was not what you think. Can't we talk about this?"

"Talk about it?" Will hissed. "Do you want me to talk about my feelings, doctor?" The empath mocked.

"Yes, I …" But before Hannibal could finish his sentence, Will slapped him with all his strength. Not hit him and break his jaw, not backhand him so that he lost his footing, no, this was an open handed, vicious slap that left an imprint of Will's hand on his skin. Never before in his life had Hannibal ever felt so humiliated.

So he could only look at Will staggered, when the Alpha snarled at him. "*This* is how I felt! And now excuse me, I have a job to do." Before turning around, ready to leave his Omega once more.

Aware that he would most likely not get another chance, Hannibal called out for him. "Sir!"

When the profiler turned around, surprised by the formal addressing, the Omega took a deep breath and gracefully sank to his knees. Right where he stood, in the middle of the pavement, with rain pouring down on him, for all present members of the behavioural science unit and the local police force to see. If Will couldn't forgive him his public humiliation everything was lost. But Hannibal would use *all* possibilities at his disposal, to convince his Alpha that he was worth another chance.

Will however looked down at him like he had never seen him before and for a heartbeat he felt possessiveness and desire flowing through their bond before the empath could tamper it down again. Still he didn't recognize the gesture, he merely repeated, "I have work to do." before leaving Hannibal behind.

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An Omega Chain

People were not staring, at least they were trying very hard not to. Still, receiving even the faintest trace of a positive response from his Alpha was enough for Hannibal to remain on his knees. After a little while he lowered himself to his heels, but he didn't move an inch, despite the concrete, the rain and the people who were looking at him with pity in their eyes.

He despised this situation, but reminded himself that it didn't matter, these people and their opinion of him didn't matter at all. Only Will and his response was important. Hannibal had humiliated Will publicly by flirting, even kissing another Alpha. A very poor choice in hindsight. Even those who were lenient in their lives had a breaking point. The friendliest people were the scariest opponents when pushed past it.

Will would never harm anybody intentionally, but pulling back from their bond had been worse for Hannibal than a knife in the gut. He felt as if someone had hollowed out his chest, leaving him empty and aching. He had to make this right and if humbling himself would get him his Alpha back, he was willing to endure it, no matter the burning shame.

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After ten minutes Will re-emerged from the makeshift tent. After a brief chat with Jack, gesturing towards the top of the neighbour's house, he approached Hannibal and held out his hands. "I'll drive. Get a blanket."

Rising to his feet, handing over his keys, Hannibal wordlessly obeyed and sat huddled up in the co-drivers-seat of his car with the heat blasting at him full force a few minutes later. Will didn't say a word.

When back at Hannibal's home, the Alpha merely ordered, "Undress" before, leaving for the bathroom. The Omega could hear water running and once his soaked clothes had been set aside, he followed Will, eyes glued to the floor. He couldn't afford any mistakes, wouldn't risk anything that could be interpreted as defiance, not when Will was finally here again.

"Get in."

In the last hour Will had uttered not even a dozen words. Nearly all of them had been commands. Yet the bliss of obedience simply didn't want to settle in. Hannibal was still too agitated to allow his biology to take over. He didn't deserve to be soothed, to experience anything but pain for what he had done. The scolding water that nearly burned his skin helped, so he sank into the steaming tub.

When Will returned to the bedroom, Hannibal curled up. Intellectually he knew that a hot bath was the best way to prevent getting sick but he didn't like being left alone again. He could smell the eucalyptus-bath Will had generously poured. But the usually peasant smell didn't sooth him today. Too big were his worries that Will would leave once more.

Those worries proved needless when his Alpha returned and put a hand on his neck, urging him to skid into the middle of the tub. Once there was room, Will slid into the water behind Hannibal. Uncomfortable silence dominated the room for a few heartbeats before Will shook his head. “For someone as smart as you, you can be remarkably foolish at times.”

At that accusation, the doctor could only nod. He was overwhelmed by the intimacy of the situation: him and his Alpha, naked, in the warm water, in his home, side by side. Will’s soft words soothed his agitated biology and when he felt Will’s hand on his shoulder, pulling him back invitingly, Hannibal could not hold back any longer. Twisting around, he slid down and wrapped his arms around his Alpha, trembling all over when he felt Will’s legs intertwining with his and holding him close to the chest.

He couldn’t say anything, couldn’t express his regret over what he had done, even though he knew Will deserved a sincere apology. He was sure that if he opened his mouth, the sobs that were building up in his chest would choke him. Hannibal couldn’t think because his whole mind seemed to be too caught up in the feeling of his Alpha finally close again. He couldn’t move because moving would bring distance between Will and himself and that was not a possibility.

When Will opened up their bond again, Hannibal could feel all the anger and the agitation his actions had caused. Clawing at Will’s shoulders, desperately trying to pull closer, the Omega buried his face in his Alpha’s neck when experiencing intense shame for what he had done. Omegas were meant to serve and to supply, to anticipate their Alpha’s wishes and to fulfil them to the best of their abilities. Despite Hannibal not wanting to succumb to every aspect of his biology, he had never wanted to hurt Will.

Will had never expected servile traits from him. Had never wanted a docile and submissive Omega who followed him around at the proper distance, jumping whenever he was in need of anything. No, Will had accepted who he was, what he wanted to do with his life. He had even accepted that Hannibal was taking lives on occasion even though it irked him greatly. All he had expected in return was respectful behaviour when in public. And Hannibal had failed him spectacularly.

Trying to pull himself closer once again, feeling the strong arms of Will wrapping around him, the Omega was no longer able to keep his composure. “I’m sorry. I am so sorry, Will. Please forgive me.” Over and over he repeated these words, sobbing into Will’s skin, shivering so hard that the water was splashing out of the tub.

But instead of commenting on Hannibal’s distress, Will only wrapped his arms tighter, fused their bodies in the hot water, burying his fingers in Hannibal’s hair, scratching his head soothingly.

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When Hannibal had finally calmed down, terribly embarrassed about what had happened, now hiding his red eyes, Will wet a facecloth with cold water and nudged Hannibal’s head away from his neck. Gently placing the cold cloth onto his Omega’s tear-streaked eyes, he pulled him in again, despite the coldness that made him shiver.

When after a little while Hannibal felt composed again, he slowly unclenched his hands from behind Will's back and hovered, uncertain for a moment what he was supposed to do, before leaving the tub.

He was offering a soft towel to his Alpha, and after having changed into their pyjamas, Hannibal sat on the bed, once again at loss of what to do. It seemed that Will had accepted his apology for his scandalizing behaviour wordlessly. But they still had to talk about the issue at hand. Hannibal doubted very much that Will would want to collar him, after what he had done. So he was puzzled when the Alpha slid onto the bed facing him, offering a square jewellery case of burgundy velvet.

When Hannibal didn't reach for it, Will took his hand and placed it on the box. "I never mentioned our anniversary because you did neither. I assumed you didn't want to make a big deal out of it. I am sorry for that misunderstanding."

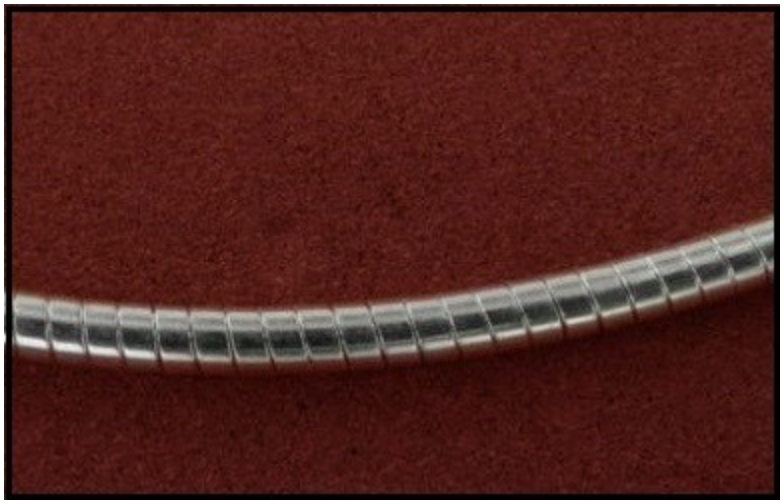
"Will, I …" Reaching for his Alpha's hands, pulling them to his mouth and kissing them reverently, Hannibal admitted. "You are the most perfect Alpha I could wish for. It is not your fault that I – who spends his time listening to people talking about their problems all day – have troubles articulating my own."

Gently caressing his partners face, Will assured him softly. "Well, I assume you didn't have anybody to be honest with in the past. But I am here Hannibal. I am not leaving you. All you have to do is talk to me."

Unable to meet his Alpha's eyes, the Omega just nodded. After a moment, he could hear Will exhale and the burgundy box was once again pushed into his line of sight. Tracing over the edges, Hannibal revealed quietly. "Jack told me about this. He said you have done researched and ordered a special delivery. That you paid a lot receive it in time."

Chuckling lowly, Will admitted. "Well, there is only one day in our lives where we can celebrate our six-month-anniversary. Don't you want to open it?"

Opening it would mean wearing it. Wearing it would mean to have an un-concealable proof of ownership around his neck. After all the troubles and worries he had gone through, prior to this very moment, a moment he had longed for and dreaded likewise, Hannibal discovered that: Yes, he did want to open the box and wear whatever Will had chosen for him.



When he swung open the lid, he could only stare. Inside, neatly probed on red velvet, lay an omega chain and a matching bracelet. When picking it up carefully he found it slightly rough to the touch. Turning it he realized that it was made of matted, black titanium. This was an elegant, and expensive necklace, nothing like the obtrusive leather or steel collars most Alphas preferred these days. It was barely five millimetres in width and long enough to sit under the hollow of his throat, accentuating his mating bite but not hiding it. It would sit low enough to be conceal it with clothes if Hannibal so wished.

Inspecting the closing mechanism he noticed, “It doesn’t need a key.”

Running his fingers over the bracelet that still lay in the casket, Will shrugged. “Well, if you don’t want to wear it, a lock wouldn’t keep it around your neck. And if you do want to wear it, why would it need a key?”

Floored by the stunning amount of trust his Alpha had in him, Hannibal cleared his throat to swallow down the bulge of emotions before pointing towards the bracelet. “Why a bracelet? Did they only come in a matching set?”

Smiling Will picked it up. “No, I had this made to my specifications. I thought that it was stupid that only the Omega wears the proof of being bonded. This way I have a piece matching yours. There should be no doubt left that we belong to each other.”

Unable to find a suitable reply for that, a reply that would show how very much the gesture meant to him, Hannibal pointed out something obvious. “They are black.”

“Yes, they swallow the light.”

Looking into his Alpha’s eyes, to see if he was sincere, Hannibal brushed to box to the floor, clutching the chain before kissing Will most desperately. His Alpha was giving him the perfect gift, something he could hide when in the office, something he could be proud to present since it was an elegant piece of jewellery, something he could wear when nobody was supposed to see him. And he was offering it like it was the most natural thing and though their bond Hannibal realized that to Will it really was. There was no doubt in his Alpha’s mind about them.

Kissing his Alpha to an inch of their lives, Hannibal shoved the chain into Will's hands somewhat feverish. "Put it on me, please." Before bending his head so that his Alpha had free access to his neck. When the slip-lock clicked close, Hannibal felt something settle in his chest. When Will offered his own bracelet, he took it and kissed Will's wrist worshipfully before closing it.

Never before had anything felt so right for Hannibal and he wondered how he could have doubted Will for a single heartbeat.

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Pleasure and Pain

To say that Will had been furious with Hannibal would have been an understatement. Though the empath was able to see situations from a different point of views than his own, seeing Hannibal kissing another had overwhelmed his instincts. He was glad that he had not to be armed, since he couldn't be sure if he wouldn't have shot that woman, despite knowing that it was not been her fault. Hannibal had hidden his designation carefully in the past and hadn't revealed it that evening. So she really was not to blame. His Omega on the other hand had made a conscious choice.

It had taken all of Will's self-control to leave the mansion, Beverly had helped simply by being there and not allowing him back in. He had hated it, hated the situation Hannibal had put them in. Since he hadn't been sure that he would be able not to exclaim against his Omega for what he had done, so he had refused to talk to him all week.

A new killer had demanded his undivided attention and when Jack had called him at the academy, Will had agreed to be picked up and brought to the crime scene. He had noticed Jack talking to Hannibal on the phone, but had refused to acknowledge it. His superior's word's had been without allegation when he said, "You are giving him quite a hard time, you know. He would have apologized already, given the chance."

"Some things are not done with, with a mere apology. How would you feel if Bella kissed someone else in public?" The rest of the ride had passed in silence.

When Hannibal had appeared at the crime scene, Will had shot his superior a murderous look, but Jack had pointedly ignored him, leaving Will to deal with his Omega. The empath had tried his best to rein in his temper, so that he would not to act on the feeling of betrayal and humiliation he had carried with him ever since that fateful evening. However, when Hannibal had appeared all calm, asked for them to 'talk', Will had lost his composure.

Never before had he thought himself capable of slapping another person, but with Hannibal's attitude, his pretence that words could solve something actions had brought upon them, Will had lashed out. He hadn't even regretted it afterwards. Sure that his Omega would leave now, he had turned away to see to the crime-scene, unwilling to deal with their relationship problems when a serial killer was on the loose.

But Hannibal had once more proven how very unique he was. Calling him back, addressing him most humbly and humiliating himself by kneeling publicly.

Not once in a hundred years had Will thought Dr. Lecter willing to take such actions to prove a point. The doctor was ruthless and proud, and yet he had sunk to his knees to appease his Alpha, not caring about how many people saw him. The implications of this action were overwhelming and a part of Will wanted to claim Hannibal, right then and there, but he knew that he still had to get into a killer's head.

Testing his Omega by leaving him behind, he was only mildly surprised when he found Hannibal at exactly the same place, soaked through from the rain and shivering from the

cold.

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When finally being in the tub, the Alpha was amazed what a brilliant and at the same time stupid the Omega he was allowed to call his own. Once giving in, Hannibal's desperation had radiated off of him and Will had done his best to calm him down. When his Omega finally apologized Will was sure that the situation was finally resolved. Not only was Hannibal sorry for his actions due to the consequences, but for the reason he had taken them in the first place. Aware that something like that wouldn't happen again, Will had decided to offer his present tonight, ignoring that their anniversary was tomorrow.

He had been quite proud of the Omega Chain he had had made for Hannibal. It was a beautiful piece of jewellery, inconspicuous enough to be hidden, but fitting the doctor's taste if he decided to show it. The Alpha had not even considered buying a collar. Hannibal would never wear something like that. Although after tonight Will was not so sure any more. His Omega seemed to be more open to act on his instincts than ever before and the Alpha was not above admitting that this satisfied him on the most primal level.

Hannibal's frantic urges to get the chain around his neck had pleased Will greatly and he had willingly given in to his Omega's desires once they both wore their new pieces of jewellery. Pleasure and pain were at war in his partner. Will could feel the echoes resonating through their bond, but even more he saw them on Hannibal's unguarded face.

Trying to calm the Omega by gently caressing him, it took Will several moments to realize that this was not what Hannibal needed tonight. So he turned them both around so that his Omega was on top of him and relaxed against the soft bedding. Unable to meet his Alpha's eyes, Hannibal gently opened his pyjamas, and with every button he freed from his hole he kissed the revealed skin with heart breaking tenderness.

Crouching lower and lower, losing his own sleep-clothes in the process, Hannibal inhaled deeply once he had reached Will'sgroin. Tentatively he kissed the skin that spread over Will's hip before looking up to ask permission if he was allowed to please his Alpha. A permission Will gave gladly. He too had missed his Omega for the last week most desperately, but his fury had kept him from giving in to these desires. Now there was no reason to hold back.

Oh, how very rewarding this situation was for him! Hannibal had always been passionate in bed, but the overwhelming need in his mind, combined with the near reverent touches of his fingertips and lips went to Will's head in a heartbeat, making him keen and arch into the caresses. When the Alpha was rock-hard Hannibal crawled up again, all the time avoiding Will's eyes, presenting his neck submissively. When reaching the top, the Omega once again buried his face in the crook of his Alpha's neck and whispered, "Please."

Unaware what Hannibal was asking for, Will made an agreeing noise, brushing over his shoulders and arms, but when arranging himself over Will's lap, ready to sink down on his erected shaft, the empath stilled him. Hannibal had not been prepared and though Will was

not particularly well endowed he was big enough that it would most certainly hurt if his Omega tried to take him unprepared. Another, broken plea made him relent. Realizing that Hannibal wanted, no, needed this, made Will rise slightly to help. It would not take away the pain but the better they were aligned the easier their union would be for the both of them.

His fingers dug into Hannibal's hips when the older man lowered himself. The feeling was indescribable, though the Omega had found pleasure from their proximity, he was by far not slick enough to allow their joining to go smoothly. The feeling of skin on skin with very little lubricant in-between nearly took Will's breath away. He was shivering when Hannibal sank down on his shaft determined, vigorously supressing any noises of discomfort.

After a moment of adjustment, the Omega began to move, not letting on of how much this was hurting. It didn't take long to find a rhythm and with every moment that passed, the Omega's biology took over and slicked his entrance until Hannibal was riding him smoothly. But losing the pain in favour of the pleasure seemed to have an opposite effect, he seemed more distressed the easier their movements became.

So this was supposed to be punishment. A punishment Will would never dish out, so Hannibal was taking it by himself. Angry for a moment to be used as means to an end, Will dug his fingers into Hannibal's hips painfully. The grateful noise this action evoked from his Omega however shot straight to his cock. Pushing away all thoughts of petty moral concerns, Will pulled his fingernails over Hannibal's back and started to push up into him. The more forceful his movements, the more painful his ministrations, the more relaxed his Omega became. But still, something was missing for Hannibal to reach his peak.

Aware that he could not hold up this punishing pace indefinitely, Will reached for Hannibal's neck, digging his fingertips into the sensitive skin, pulling down. His Omega was shivering all over, his emotional turmoil, the pleasure Will was evoking and the pain the Alpha caused all blended together in an overwhelming tidal wave that threatened to drown him. He was sobbing now because he didn't know how to break the spell Will was conjuring within him. How to find the release, he so desperately needed.

Summoning every last bit of power his biology granted him over his Omega, Will pulled Hannibal closer so that all the other man could do was look into his eyes. Will's words were a mere whisper but they echoed in Hannibal's brain a hundredfold when the Alpha ordered, "You will come for me. Now!" Before sinking his teeth into the junction of his Omega's neck and shoulder. The blinding pain combined with his Alpha's command was what pushed Hannibal over the edge and into an orgasm that shook his whole body and made him break down in Will's arms. Instantly his Alpha hugged him protectively, fusing their bodies together, riding out the weaves of pleasure that had engulfed them both.

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"We have an invitation to the opera next Friday. They are giving Il Trovatore with Victoria Cannizzo as Leonora. I have been told she is quite good." Will was the first to speak after an hour of basking in the afterglow of their reunion. They had washed and cleaned the bite-mark he had left. Hannibal had reluctantly allowed it to be dressed and only after being reminded

that he would ruin his pyjamas if it was left bleeding. Now he lay splayed over Will's chest, holding on to the seam of his Alpha's nightshirt.

A question was implied and for a moment Hannibal wondered if this really was the way it should be. His Alpha asking for his opinion, instead of simply acting on his own wishes. Reluctantly he said, "I am surprised that you want to see an opera where people get burned and poisoned. I didn't take you for a fan of the classics." When he realized the implied critique he froze for a second and only relaxed when Will scratched his neck soothingly.

"Well, your friend Lady Saunders wants to spend an evening with us and after everything we have put her through, I think we should indulge her."

Hannibal tried his best to supress a shudder when entertaining the idea of seeing his old friend again, after having behaved so uncivil towards her. "If that's what you wish for, I will of course accompany you."

"Oh, yes." Will's voice was like liquid silk once again, caressing Hannibal's ears with every word he spoke. "And I will make you remember who you belong to for every minute of this long, long evening. Just you wait."

Trembling from excitement, Hannibal looked up and keened into the possessive kiss his Alpha bestowed on him. There were times when he forgot that as an Alpha, Will was biologically inclined to assert his dominance. Hannibal was eager to find out what Will had in store for him.

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An Evening at the Opera

Aware that he owed his friend an apology, Hannibal was particularly meticulous on Friday evening when putting on his ‘amour’. His black tuxedo suited him perfectly and he was currently tying his bow tie to complete the ensemble. Will was coughing discreetly behind him. When Hannibal turned around he found his Alpha, fidgeting with the seams of his dinner jacket. He had anticipated that Will would not feel particularly comfortable in such formal wear, but his partner looked remarkable in the dark grey tux Hannibal had prepared for him.

“You look extraordinary.” Hannibal commented, pulling the bow tie out of Will’s fingers. “Allow me.”

Looking up so that the doctor could complete the outfit, Will said, “I have to admit I feel quite strange. I’m not used to so sophisticate clothing.”

Brushing an unseen grain of dust from Will’s shoulder, Hannibal smiled, “We should see that you get more occasions to dress up, especially since you look excellent in a tuxedo. I will be envied by everybody tonight.”

With a smile Will caressed Hannibal’s cheek before leaning up into a kiss. Chaste at first, it took only seconds for their passion to ignite, before Will whispered, “Turn around and hold on to the dresser.”

Heeding the command, the Omega felt fingers trailing the waistband of his trousers, before painstakingly slowly opening them. He was growing hard already, yet managed to remind his Alpha, “Our taxi will be here in ten minutes. Are you …?” The rest of the sentence was drowned in a groan, when his pants and boxers pooled at his ankles and he felt his partner’s hot breath at his naked backside.

Growling lowly, Will observed, “I suggested no pants.”

Shivering slightly, Hannibal swallowed heavily. “That would not have been very appropriate, I’m afraid.” He choked when he felt the tip of Will’s tongue caressing his hole. They had not had time to play for the last two days, so Hannibal was more than eager to be taken by his Alpha, regardless of the prospect of being late, though he usually detested that.

“Have it your way then …” Will commented, before ploughing deeper, spreading Hannibal with the tip of his tongue, before entering him with a finger.

Heat was already pooling in Hannibal’s belly and he felt Will eagerly lapping up the juices his body produced. He whined lowly, when his partner straightened. Following Will’s command, “Look at yourself,” and raised his eyes towards the mirror. His Alpha was standing behind him, eyes dark with passion, and he could see his own perfect appearance that did not mirror the inner turmoil Will had evoked.

He trembled, holding on to the dresser so hard his knuckles turned white, when the Alpha whispered, “You think I have forgotten what brought this evening upon us?”

Not trusting his own voice, Hannibal only shook his head, inhaling sharply, when he felt the tip of a foreign object at his backside.

“A promised you a reminder, didn’t I?”

Once again the Omega could only nod, too concentrated on the foreign object that was slowly entering him from behind. He felt his body adjusting, once Will pulled up his silk boxers that now caressed his eager cock. Hidden in between his arse-cheeks Hannibal was sure that nobody would suspect anything. But how he should go through the evening filled like that was beyond him.

To make matters worse, Will caressed his legs with the tips of his fingers, ghosting kisses over his flanks and backside before closing his trousers again. Making sure that his Omega’s outfit was impeccable once again, he pressed himself into Hannibal’s body from behind, his hard cock nudging the but-plug. Will’s warm hand on Hannibal’s groin directed the Omegas attention to his own, aching hardness.

“The taxi will be here in three minutes, don’t be late.”

When they sat in the backseat of the cab not five minutes later, Hannibal didn’t give any indication that anything was out of the ordinary, only his cock straightening his pants, and his slowly soaking boxers that gave off the most delicious smell told the Alpha about the torturous evening he was sentencing his partner too.

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Will gave Hannibal and his friend Lady Sarah Saunters a moment to themselves, fetching drinks. As expected the female Alpha inhaled deeply once Hannibal was close enough, but gave no indication that she noticed the Omega’s eager condition. When Will returned with three glasses of Champagne, they exchanged pleasantries before retreating to Lady Sarah’s box.

With the two Alphas at the front row, for the first time in his life, Hannibal was glad to linger behind. The anal-plug was shooting sparks of pleasure though his body, whenever he moved a little in his seat. It was alluring to be at Will’s mercy so publicly. Especially when knowing that his Alpha would not force him to wear the toy, if Hannibal gave any indication that he felt uncomfortable. The situation was a test for his restrain, and despite his determination to see this through, he gratefully intertwined their fingers to ground himself, when Will reached back to offer his hand.

During the first break, Sarah was explaining to Will the fine nuances of the opera, the intentions of Verdi when writing it and the quality of the performance. She smiled knowingly, when Hannibal asked Will quietly if he could talk to him for a moment.

Being familiar with the Lyric Opera House, the Omega guided his Alpha into a secluded area, kissing him most desperately as soon as the door of the small conference room he had

directed them to, closed behind them. “Please … please, fuck me!” Hannibal was too far gone for finesse, too lost in the unrequited please that had built up for the last hour and a half. He whimpered desperately, when Will circled his throat, pushing him back before asking mischievously. “Are you sure? There is no toilet up here. Lady Sarah would know.”

Trying to get closer again, Hannibal assured him feverishly, “I don’t care. Please, Will, I …”

But before he could make any promises to sway his Alpha, Will let go and leaned back against the door. “Alright, prepare me.”

Immediately the Omega sank to his knees, freeing Will’s hard shaft from the confines of his trousers, swallowing it eagerly. After a minute, Will pushed him back, bending him over the conference table in the middle of the room. Without further preparation, he pulled the but-plug free and before Hannibal could mourn the loss of the toy, Will impaled him on his shaft with one swift motion.

Scrambling for purchase, Hannibal was forced to endure being shoved over the polished surface, since there was nothing to hold on to.

Will enjoyed his Omega’s compliance. He had ripped the back of Hannibal’s boxers to gain access to his backside, ensuring, that the silky surface was brushing over the head of Hannibal’s cock with every move they made.

When Hannibal tried to reach down to touch his cock, Will intertwined their fingers and placed their hands at the small of Hannibal’s back, growling lowly, “Oh no, you will come like this or not at all!” before picking up speed, making the Omega desperate for some sort of leverage to push back into Will’s movements.

When Will finally came, he held onto Hannibal’s hips, pulling his boxers taunt, granting that tiny amount of extra friction that made the Omega tumble over the edge as well. Sinking boneless against the table-top Hannibal only registered at the back of his mind that Will was slowly pulling out before re-inserting the anal-plug.

Hannibal tensed in alarm, when he felt a cold blade touching his skin. But when Will soothed him, he relaxed again, noticing that his Alpha was cutting his boxers from his body, cleaning him with the mostly drenched material. It would be good enough not to broadcast their sexual activities, but Lady Sarah would still notice. Hiding his face in the crook of his arm, Hannibal wondered what he had come to his mind when dragging Will away for such short-lived relieve.

But when he straightened again, he felt the semen of his Alpha coating his inner walls, making the plug that was once more inside him, all the more prominent. When he turned around, he saw Will throwing away his boxers, before straightening his clothes in the reflection of the window. Not addressing the situation, Will ordered, “Let’s go. The second Act will start in a few minutes.”

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Hannibal was painfully hard, when the opera had finally come to an end. He was in a haze of passion and desire, and followed his Alpha on instinct. He noticed that Lady Sarah and Will where talking but too caught up in his body's yearning to care. He saw Sarah allowing Will to kiss her cheek before offering Hannibal her hand. Dutifully the Omega kissed it, his eyes lowered to the floor.

The cab-ride home passed in silence and Hannibal slid to his knees in the entrance hall, once the door was locked behind them. He simply didn't have the strength to remain upright any longer. His heart swelled under the praise of his Alpha when Will whispered into his ear, hot breath teasing overly sensitive skin, "You have been so good tonight. I was really proud of you."

They made love three more times that night, once in the entrance hall, with Will fucking Hannibal against the door. Once in the shower where he entered his Omega from behind, letting the hot water and his soft fingertips caressing Hannibal's skin and finally in bed, where Will took his time to show Hannibal how very much he had appreciated his performance tonight.

Dawn was breaking when Hannibal was finally wrapped around the smaller man from behind, looking at the cleaned toy on his nightstand. It was flesh-coloured and quite inconspicuous in appearance. But Hannibal had felt it's affects so he would not underestimate it. In a low whisper he asked, "Will you use it again?"

Pulling Hannibal's hand to his lips, kissing his palm, Will promised, "If you are good … or bad. I guess that depends on you."

Snuggling closer into his Alpha, Hannibal admitted, "We could try again, but I would prefer not to wear it in public. It's very hard to act decently when my body desires you so much."

Turning around, so that he could look at his Omega who once again avoided his eyes, Will nudged up Hannibal's chin so that Hannibal was forced to look at him. Softly he reminded him, "Today was a well-deserved punishment. You are well aware that you could have ended it at any given moment. I would never force you to do something that makes you uncomfortable."

"I know," Hannibal admitted. "It was not uncomfortable, just … different. But I could enjoyed it because you didn't force it on me. You have the eerie ability to bring out parts of me that had long lain dormant."

"Hannibal." Will gazed at his Omega with worry. "I would never force anything on you. You know that. I am not him."

Dragging Will closer, burying his face in his Alpha's neck, Hannibal inhaled the soothing scent, relaxing into the embrace. "No, you are not. You are everything I need, and I am grateful that I have found you. More grateful than you will ever know."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

An Inappropriate Victim

Eleven months, three weeks and five days had passed, since Will had claimed him in this very room. With gentle fingers Hannibal once again opened the case that held the present he had bought for Will. The gift had been chosen, with the empath's difficulties of keeping track of time when profiling, in mind. Hannibal had visited several jewelleries – one of them with a quite rude employee – and had spent countless hours online in his search for the perfect watch.

True, the brand was not as exclusive as he might have preferred for himself, but when seeing the watch he had known that it would fit his Alpha. It was unobtrusive, strong both in mechanics as well as the band of woven metal and quite elegant so that it would fit every item of clothing Will might chose. Even one of his horrible flannel shirts the empath liked so very much because he claimed them to be comfortable. A feeling he severely lacked in his line of duty.

With the help of the particularly rude watch-maker, Hannibal was planning a feast for the day after tomorrow and was looking forward to treat both himself and Will with some carefully chosen dishes. He was aware that his Alpha didn't share his preference for human meat, but had found a butcher whose products lived up to Dr. Lecter's impeccable standards.

When his Alpha entered, Hannibal hid the box under the cushions of the sofa, but clearly had not been fast enough, because after a brief kiss the profiler asked, "Keeping secrets, doctor?"

"Many" Hannibal smiled, quite comfortable in the knowledge that his Alpha would not pry.

Sinking into his Omega's arms, he had run quite late due to a mandatory dinner with the authorities of the academy, Will sighed relieved and relaxed when inhaling Hannibal's scent.

Gently carding his fingers through his Alpha's hair, Hannibal asked, "Should I play something for you?" His music might help Will to relax even more.

"If you don't have to move to do it, yes please."

Picking up the remote from his audio system, Hannibal chose a piece of Claude Debussy from his vast music collection. Will had shown a particular liking for this brilliant composer and when he was nudged he explained, “The piece is called Arabesque No. 1.”

Intertwining their fingers, Will mumbled sleepily, “Entwined ornaments. How fitting.”

Enjoying his Alpha’s caresses and the comfortable weight of the smaller man against his chest, Hannibal asked quietly, “Will, you will be home in time for dinner on Friday, won’t you?”

Pulling his partner’s fingers to his lips, kissing them tenderly Will promised, “I would not miss it for anything.”

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

What Will hadn’t counted on when making his promise, was Jack picking him up right out of his lecture Friday afternoon. The barely above average whispering from his students told Will that this had become a far too common occurrence to surprise anybody. Well, anybody but him. He despised to have his classes cut short, he was not giving lessons on ancient history but educating future FBI agents about what to expect in the field.

Keeping his standing dinner invitation with Hannibal in mind Will texted him, warning that he might be delayed. The answer he received made him close his eyes, bracing himself for what he might see.

]> He should not have been found before Monday. I am sorry.<[

Well, the profiler had not come across any Ripper killings for the last twelve months, Will reminded himself when deleting the message. He should be grateful that Hannibal had not felt the need to take someone’s life, but that didn’t make it much easier to prepare himself for his partner’s latest victim. The male was artfully draped over the counter of his shop. Watches instead of his own skin adored his arms, an extension to the one that sat in his chest. Everything was precise and neat with very little blood at the edges.

Will had told Hannibal once that he didn’t want to waste time with his victims. But being around his colleagues it would have been hard to not at least try to see what had happened. The outcome had been a piece of art, at least in Hannibal’s mind, the killing slowly and methodically, as one would expect from the Chesapeake Ripper. But everything changed once Will got a hold on the personal file of the victim.

]> Will be late, don’t wait for me. <[

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The profiler didn’t return home that night, instead he stayed at the office going over each and every piece of information he could get his hands on concerning Alan Greenberg. When he returned to Hannibal’s mansion late Saturday afternoon he sat in his car for a long time, looking at the folder that held the entire life of the watchmaker his Omega had killed.

He already felt the pull, the undeniable desire to be close to his partner. It weakened him since they were meant to be together. But his anger was still so prominent. He had seen all Ripper-killings for the last two years. He had known what he had gotten himself into when mating with the psychopath, probably better than anybody due to his empathy. But now he was honest to god angry and didn't even remotely want to supress that emotion.

Hannibal seemed to be able to sense this feeling since he kept his distance, although he hovered just outside of Will's visual field once the profiler entered the house. When he started to prepare dinner the door of the kitchen remained open so that the Omega had a small line of sight to his Alpha, who had chosen a place in the living room. When Will used the facilities he found a carefully arranged plate on the table in front of him. When going over its contents he found crisp vegetables, creamy cheese and home-made bread alongside of it.

When the Alpha accepted the peace offering, Hannibal hovered behind him unsure of what to do. "You are angry with me."

"Really, what gave it away?" the Alpha replied sarcastically.

"You are penalising me by keeping your distance."

After a few moments of heavy silence, Will ordered, "Sit," gesturing towards the chair next to him. He shoved the file towards the psychiatrist before starting his meal. He knew by heart what his Omega would find. Mister Greenberg had been a hard-working man with a lot of bad fortune. His daughter had been diagnosed with bone marrow cancer last year and after finding a proper donor in her mother's sister, little Felicia and her mother had moved to Florida to raise the money they needed for the operation.

Alan Greenberg had used all of his free time to organize online fund-raisers and petitions to help his only child. Sadly his work had suffered from his diverted mind. His work had been substandard and many clients had not appreciated their several thousand dollar watches being scratched or repaired only to break a week later anew. So Hannibal had been one of many unhappy customers, but he had been the only one who had done something about it.

The doctor had paled when reading all this, repeatedly looking from the file to his Alpha and back again. Never before had Hannibal felt remorse when taking another's life, but now his bad conscience was quite prominent.

Will addressed the feeling relentlessly. "Do you feel bad because you took an innocent life, or because I am punishing you?"

"I never intended to offend you in any way."

Feeling unable to supress his anger any longer, Will hit the table and shouted, "Damn Hannibal, there are hundreds and hundreds of assholes out there, why did it have to be him? There was a photo in his drawer, of him with his family, his little girl. Every time I close my eyes I see this girl, dying, because her father is not around any longer to help gather the money. How did you think that would make me feel?"

“I didn’t …” Hannibal attempted to answer before Will snapped at him again, “No, you didn’t. He did something to set you off so you killed him. That’s why you were so chipper this last week. I was so happy and now …” Sinking into the cushions of the sofa bone-tired, Will closed his eyes, covering them with his forearm.

Realizing that this would not get them anywhere, he patted the sofa next to him, whispering barely audible, “Come here.”

Slowly, cautiously Hannibal rose from his chair and sank into Will’s embrace. It took the Omega only a few minutes in the arm of his Alpha, to lose the tension that had held him upright ever since yesterday evening and he slid down until his head was in Will’s lap.

“Why don’t you … why did you never order me to stop?” He asked hesitant after a little while.

The doctor had thought about this repeatedly for the last year. Will was his Alpha that position came with the power of command. As rewarding as it was for an Omega to follow his Alpha’s orders, as painful was it to disobey. If Will enforced often enough that he didn’t want Hannibal to take another life, sooner or later the compulsion would take hold.

Exhaling tiredly Will asked, still not looking at him, “What kind of Alpha would that make me, if I tried to change who you are?”

Once more in awe of Will Graham, Hannibal shifted slightly and wound his arms around Will’s waist, pulling himself closer. “I have … I bought something for you, for our anniversary.”

“I know, but now is really not a good time.”

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Two days later, a small package, wrapped in a newspaper article sat beside Will’s plate at breakfast. Carefully unwrapping the gift, Will inspected the highly unusual wrapping paper. It was the first page of a printing paper from Florida. It showed the picture of a little girl in the arms of her mother and aunt, holding up a statement from their bank account that showed a rather impressive amount of money. The headline spoke about a guardian angel who had anonymously donated a substantial amount of money, rendering the bone-marrow transplantation of little Felicity possible. A true blessing from above after the heartrending loss the family had suffered only recently.

Entering the kitchen with his present in hand, Will circled the counter where Hannibal was arranging their food. The Omega hesitated when he felt his Alpha at his back. They had slept on the sofa for the last two nights with only the barest amount of contact. Still it was better than being alone. Unsure of how his gift might be received the psychiatrist hesitated.

“Apology accepted.”

Hannibal sagged against Will when the Alpha crowded him against the counter, barely able to turn around before he pulled the younger man as close as possible. For several minutes they merely stood and enjoyed the proximity before Will nudged his Omega. “Breakfast?”

Once the watch was closed around his wrist, Will kissing his Omega before they enjoyed the first relaxing meal after three days.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

A Conference Calls

“No, thank you. I really do not want to eat anything, even if the meal is included in the price of the ticket.” Hannibal did his best not to lose his temper. Despite the flight attendant of the AirTran flight being polite and only doing her job, her cheerfulness grated on the Omega’s nerves. Even more so, since he was preparing himself for a conference that would be attended by psychiatrists from all over America in Tampa, Florida. A conference he would be attending without his Alpha.

Will had been distracted for the last three weeks. Working as a field-agent regularly now, required him to go through several tests, both physical and psychological, once a year. Despite his best efforts to help Will, the man was an empath with a strong tendency towards Asperger syndrome, not the person the government wanted with an officially sanctioned gun. If they wanted him out of the field they just had to push the right buttons. Despite Will being far more centred since claiming Hannibal, he still was socially awkward at times.

The psychiatrist was reasonably sure that Jack Crawford would not allow for Will to be pushed back into the classroom. Still he had left his Alpha alone for the most part, giving him time and room to prepare for his tests. Hannibal had been relieved that Will had at least remembered to return to his house most evenings. He knew the profiler to be confused easily when his attention was firmly tied. At least the Omega could be sure that his Alpha would be able to make time for him once he returned. The final tests were supposed to be at the end of this week.

So Hannibal clenched his teeth and took a deep breath, looking out of the window, ignoring the undeniable feeling of longing in his chest. He would do this, all alone. He had not missed a conference for the last ten years, enjoying too much how his colleagues tried to outmatch each other with the most interesting cases of psychological disorders, oblivious that a full functioning psychopath in their midst. Fourteen months ago he had even joined their competition, having gotten Will as his patient. Since this conference had been shifted from the middle of the summer to early fall, he had not been in contact with any of his colleagues after being claimed.

Looking at the empty seat beside him, Hannibal hoped that nobody would take it. A valid hope since they were already late for take-off. He didn’t like being trapped between the window and another person, no matter how comfortable the seats were. He looked outside, gazing at a worker who was signalling something to the stewardess. Hannibal didn’t realize that one last traveller boarded the plane before the doors were closed. He tampered down his agitation when the seat beside him was claimed, ignoring this inconvenient passenger.

When the person beside him was asked by the stewardess, to store the bag under the front seat, and answered with a soft, “Of course, no problem,” Hannibal’s head whipped around. The empty seat beside him now hosted his Alpha, who seemed a little dishevelled, but perfectly friendly while talking to the flight attendant.

Why was Will here? His last test must have been finished only a short while ago, since he still wore the clothes he had put on this morning. He seemed to have dashed from headquarters to the airport to make it in time. Obviously he had prepared for this journey in advance.

“Why didn’t you tell me that you would accompany me?” Hannibal asked, somehow breathless from relieve of having Will by his side for the next few days.

Once he had fastened his seatbelt, Will looked at him a little tired, “Why haven’t you asked?”

Hannibal hadn’t asked, had not once mentioned the conference since he had known how important these tests were for Will. He had not wanted to distract his Alpha, to show himself supportive. In hinder sight not the wisest decision. He should have given Will the chance to verbalize his wishes to either go with him or stay behind. The way Hannibal had handled things spoke of his assumption that Will would not wish to join him.

It seemed that his Alpha had little problems reading him, because Will’s warm hand caressed his cheek, leaning closer to brush a kiss over Hannibal’s lips. His words were a mere breath, ghosting over the Omega’s face when he whispered, “I will always be by your side given the chance. I too work better when you are around, you always seem to forget that.”

“My apologies, I should have given you the chance to share your decision instead of working on assumptions.”

“Yes, you should have,” Will confirmed, relaxing against the chair. “But this won’t happen again. Next time you will know better.” And with that the Alpha closed his eyes, to catch up on some much needed sleep, leaving his Omega to deal with the obnoxious flight attendant who tried to collect Will’s opinion on the in-flight menu.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Two-and-a-half blessed hours of sleep and a coke later, Will nearly felt as good as new. He had suffered nearly as much as Hannibal from the brief contact he had had with his Omega for the last three weeks, but it had been inevitable.

When he had talked to Alana, who had been one of the examiners of his psychological review, sharing how much he was looking forward to a weekend with his partner alone the female psychiatrist had told him about the conference. Not interested in going herself, since it was ‘a parade of cocks who showed off their nutjobs’ – her words, not Will’s – she had volunteered her ticket to him, so that he would get a place in the first class. Flying commercial was not an experience Will particularly enjoyed.

Dr. Bloom had even managed to arrange Hannibal and Will’s seating arrangements. Wondering when the psychiatrist would share his weekend-plans, Will had kept these preparations a secret, even pushed them out of his mind when the psychological board ordered a review of his initial exam. Apparently the board had a bad feeling of letting someone with the clear tendency towards autism, who got lost in the minds of serial killers,

carry a weapon. Jack Crawford's opinion had finally ended the discussion and Alana had ushered Will into the airport at the very last minute.

Still when they arrived at the hotel an hour later, Will was already tired again. The last weeks were catching up with him, so he waited by the luggage, leaving Hannibal to deal with the crowded check-in. It didn't take long to convince the concierge that Dr. Lecter's room would host a second guest, especially not after the psychiatrist had glared at the young man meaningful, assuring him that the Alpha would not be happy to be left waiting for so long.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

"Formal wear, really? It's nearly thirty degrees outside." Will sighed, looking at Hannibal desperately, unable to bind the same sophisticated knot his partner was wearing with his own slender tie.

Judging the suit and dress-shirt of his Alpha, Hannibal picked a storm-blue tie from his own stock that would compliment the colour of Will's eyes. "They have air-condition, and you look dashing, dear Will. I will be envied all evening." Easily binding a double Windsor knot, Hannibal turned his Alpha towards the mirror so that he could see for himself how perfect he looked, preening inwardly to see an item of his own clothes on his partner.

Smiling Will took in his own appearance, before looking at the Omega who stood at his accustomed place behind his right shoulder. Hannibal wore a brown suit with a cream coloured shirt and an orange tie. The colour-scheme was warm and inviting, making the usually so controlled psychiatrist appear softer. Straightening labels that didn't need straightening, Will pulled his Omega closer kissing him adoringly. No matter where they were, Tampa or Baltimore, as long as they were together so Will was content. "As will I."

Adjusting the collar and the tie Hannibal was wearing, his Omega would surely not enjoy his colleagues seeing his mating bite or the chain he wore, Will nodded to indicate that they were ready to go. Barely twenty feet out of their door, they met the first of Dr. Lecter's colleagues, who engaged in an excited conversation with Hannibal about the upcoming schedule. Will just followed them wordlessly.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

During dinner, Hannibal had the seating arrangements changed so that once more it was possible for Will to remain at his side. Once they were seated a friend of the doctor seemed overly excited to see Hannibal again. The dark-haired man in his mid-thirties chatted most excited with the psychiatrist and touched him repeatedly. The movements were inconspicuous, on the arm or on the shoulder to emphasize a point or to draw Hannibal's attention towards something, still, Will did not particularly like the proximity between them.

He was distracted by a delicate, blonde psychiatrist his age who sat on his left side. She involved him in a quite interesting conversation. At first she hadasked about his work, and when he revealed that he was a profiler for the FBI, she introduced Dr. Wainwright, an elderly man with horn-rimmed glasses and a beard that made him look a little like Father Christmas, into their conversation. The man was working for the court to compile mental

profiles of dangerous criminals who tried to stay out of jail by claiming to have been mentally disturbed when convicting their felon.

Dr. Saunton, the blonde female, was working mostly with children who suffered from Asperger-syndrome and Autism. She shared the story of a young girl who was obsessed with flowers. The girl in question had knowledge rivalling that of grown botanists at the age of twelve. But she was unable to go through a day of school without locking herself into the toilet at some point, when she could no longer deal with the overwhelming level of noise that surrounded her.

“Doctor Lecter has a similar case, you know.” The elderly psychiatrist told Will, appearing quite fascinated. “He told us about this patient of his last year. He shares the same mental disorders as most of my colleague's children, only he is fully functioning."

With a smile the female doctor added, "He lives detached from society, but I was amazed of how good a grown-up can get over such a handicap when given the right environment to live and work in.”

“Really,” Will was turning his head around, looking at his psychiatrist who swallowed briefly before looking at his former patient. Obviously Hannibal had listened in on Will’s conversation, and was well aware what had been discussed. Glaring at his Omega, Will merely answered, “That sounds very interesting,” before looking back at the two psychiatrists. “Please, tell me more.”

Hannibal took a fortifying breath, before returning to his conversation with his colleague, Markus Rigauld. He was well aware that his Alpha was displeased to have been discussed as a ‘case study’. Hannibal could share the sentiment. The only excuse he could offer was the fact that a relationship between him and Will had not been desirable during the last conference. Making the likeliness of Will finding out that Hannibal had shared some information about him close to zero.

Trying to gauge how angry his Alphas was, Hannibal slowly extended his hand under the protection of the table-cloth, touching Will's knee with the tip of his fingers. If the empathy was furious he would pull away. Will did not deal well with physical contact when angry. But the younger man only turned around and looked into his eyes. The message clear ‘We will talk about this, later!’ before reaching under the cover to intertwine their fingers, maintaining contact until dinner was served.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

An Apology

As expected the first dinner was dull, a mere repetition of the schedule all attendants had received beforehand. Still, the annunciations were accompanied by an acceptable meal making them all the more bearable. Afterwards a few doctors decided to meet at the hotel-bar, offering Will and Hannibal to join them. As expected Hannibal accepted the invitation but excused himself after barely an hour, aware that Will was not comfortable when topics were addressed he knew close to nothing about. Contradictory to other empaths, Will found no joy in reading those around him. His mind inevitably pointed out their darkest character-traits and he didn't want to deal with something like that in his free time.

Once they returned to their room, Hannibal crowded Will against the door, eagerly peeling the Alpha out of his jacket. With dexterous fingers he opened the knot of the tie. When he opened the buttons of Will's dress-shirt one by one, he trailed kisses over the revealed skin, sinking to his knees in front of his Alpha.

Slightly disoriented from the strong liqueur and intoxicated by his Omegas kisses, Will only realized where this was going when Hannibal opened his trousers. "Hannibal, I …" he breathed, shaking his head to get some clarity. "We need to talk!"

Not stopping in his attempts to rid his Alpha of his clothes, Hannibal brushed a tender kiss over Will's belly seductively before looking up. "Of course, what do you want to discuss?" Leaning down again, nibbling on Will's hipbones once they were free from the confining cloth.

"You did …" Will tried, "You shouldn't!" before groaning when Hannibal's breath ghosted over his erected shaft. His Omega knew him far too well. So he had no difficulties to drive him crazy with need within moments.

Licking a tantalizing trail from the base of Will's cock to its tip, the older man looked up again. His words were a mere whisper, fanning over the Alpha's already leaking erection. "Do you want me to stop?"

"No! God!" Will hissed frustrated, when the man used the tips of his talented fingers to caress his thighs, lovingly touching the sensitive skin of the younger man's pelvis before circling the head of the cock with the tip of his tongue. But this time his Alpha gathered his wits again and buried his fingers in the Omegas hair, pulling him off in a superhumanly effort. Glaring down at Hannibal, he growled, "I am supposed to be angry with you! How could you, Hannibal? What did you think?"

Aware that his favourite method of getting his Alpha's mind of unpleasant matters would not work today, Hannibal closed his eyes and put his forehead against Will’s hip. He did not try to touch the younger man's erection again, to derail his Alpha's train of thought. If Will was conscious enough to stop him in the middle of fellatio he would not let this go.

Hannibal had made a mistake, he was well aware of that. It would not happen again, both knew that either, since the psychiatrists position had changed when mating with his Alpha.

The biological imperative of an Omega was to be supportive of his 'Master', despite the circumstances. Will had never insisted on blind loyalty, but Hannibal knew that he would never offer any information about Will freely from now on. His protective instinct towards the young man was too strong by now.

Admitting defeat he looked up apologetic and asked quietly, "Do you *want* to be angry with me?"

Fingers that had restricted before now caressed slowly. Will was speaking softly again, his words smoothing Hannibal's frazzled nerves since the Omega never dealt well with his Alpha being displeased. "No, Hannibal, I do not want to be angry with you. But I don't want to be a case study for a board of psychiatrists either. I have been in this situation many times and the feeling of being under scrutiny makes me very uncomfortable."

Hoping to turn this around, Hannibal pleaded, "Then let me make you forget about it. This won't happen again. You know me well enough to be aware that I would never betray your interests." Quietly the Omega added, "Not anymore."

Looking into his Omegas eyes, seeing nothing but honestly and the longing to make this up to him, Will only nodded, nudging Hannibal towards the bed. "Let's relocate. I am not sure I will be able to remain on my feet after you are finished with me."

Smiling at the implied compliment, Hannibal helped Will out of his shoes and socks, before splaying the younger man out on the king-sized bed.

The Omega took his time. Their lubricant was put to good use, when Hannibal massaged first Will's tense back, before working on his arms and legs. When the Alpha turned around the same treatment was given to his shoulders, his chest and then Hannibal travelled lower. Boneless and still a little drunk Will only smiled at him before the older man leaned down and started anew what he had begun at the door.

Hannibal was teasing a little. He was well versed in offering pleasure to his Alpha. Both had learned that Will enjoyed being held at the brink of orgasm before being pushed over and his Omega had somewhat become an expert at that. But now all Hannibal wanted to do was to make Will feel as relaxed and comfortable as possible. That's why the building of the passion was slow, nearly tranquil. The older man's movements were calculated to bring as much pleasure as possible without overwhelming.

When Will finally erupted in his mouth, Hannibal swallowed eagerly, delighted to feel his Alpha radiating content above him. He savoured the feeling of Will's heady release. Never before had he thought it possible to find so much joy in seeing to the fulfilment of another person, willingly ignoring his own. True, Will was big on returning the favour, but in that very moment, Hannibal felt satisfied to just be with his Alpha.

When Will shifted slightly, curling up around him until Hannibal's head rested on Will's upper arm, the Omega finally voiced his regret. "I am sorry that I have shared your medical history with my colleagues. That was quite indiscrete of me."

Nipping at his Omega's neck, Will reminded him. "Well, nobody down there knows that it was me they were talking about. So I guess you have kept my name to yourself. It's just …"

Sighing and burying his face in his partner's neck, inhaling deeply to ground himself in the familiar scent, the empathy continued. "It had happened before, you know. When I was expelled from active duty because I couldn't separate my mind from the killers any more. When sleep had been nothing but a faint idea and I ate so little that I barely could tolerate a piece of toast. Dozens of psychiatrists and doctors had unsuccessfully looked at me over the years. Tried to find a 'cure' for my 'illness'. Tried to change me in a way that would enable me to ignore my gift and live like any other person. I don't want that again, being looked at like I am sick."

Unexpected jealousy flared up in Hannibal's chest, and the doctor had to fight to keep his composure when stating soberly, "So I am but one in a long list of doctors who had attempted to helped you."

Aware of his Omega's feelings, Will gently carded his fingers though the older man's hair, whispering into his ear, "No, you are the first in a very short list of friends, who not only tried to help me but actually succeeded."

When Hannibal turned around to look at his Alpha, Will smiled at him. "Yes, there were psychiatrists before you. But they all tried to change who I was, so that I would fit in better. But that change would have come at the cost of my empathic insight. That was a too high of a price to pay and I am glad that I found another way. You succeeded because you never tried to change me," on an afterthought he added, "at least not that way. You wanted me to embrace it, to let the darkness consume me, but you never tried to 'help' me, to supress what I can see."

"What kind of psychiatrist would it make me, if I tried to change who you are?" Hannibal stated, mirroring the words Will had offered after the Chesapeake Ripper had taken an innocent victim.

Kissing his Omega's throat, Will whispered, "A very clever psychopath who tried to evade his capturer."

With a grin, both man relocated under the covers, rearranging themselves until Will lay in Hannibal's arms, with the Omega wrapped around him from behind.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

When sleep evaded him, Will asked after a while, "Why did you stop?"

Unable to feign ignorance, such folly was beneath Hannibal Lecter, the serial killer answered, "Because my respect for you grew stronger than my willingness to risk your mind to ensure my freedom. If there had ever been a person with a sane mind, who can understand what my victims mean to me, it's you."

"I would not go so far as to call me 'sane'."

Nuzzling into his Alpha's hair, the doctor whispered, "As sane as a man can be who mates with a serial killer."

When Will snickered but didn't comment on that, Hannibal added an afterthought. He was well aware that Will knew about this, at least he hoped that Will knew since it was very important. "You know that I love you. I am aware that my feelings might differ from those of a 'normal' person, but I do love you, most times even more than myself. Whatever I do to displease you. Whenever I do something that angers you, you must never forget that."

With a small smile, Will snuggled closer into the embrace of his strong, unconquerable Omega. "I see into the hearts of men, into the darkest corners of their minds. I know you, everything you are and I would never trade you for anybody else. The feeling of 'love' we share might be different from those around us. But that does not make it any less valuable, any less cherished. So don't worry, my love, I know how you feel and I will never forget it."

When they were close to falling asleep, Hannibal spoke up one last time, "Will?"

"Yes?"

"There is something I should tell you about Dr. Rigauld." He did not like it, did not like it at all, but Will would like it even less if he found out by accident.

Suddenly aware that this was important, Will opened his eyes again and looked out into the moon-lit night. "I'm listening."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Possessive Partners

Enjoying an early breakfast on the hotel terrace, Will was on his way of gathering some fruits from the rich buffet when one of the participants of the conference, approached him. The tall redhead wore short trousers and a knotted blouse, aiming for sexy more than professional when she passed the profiler by and inhaled deeply. Stopping, she picked up a plate, taxing him from the side.

When Will turned, ready to leave, she 'accidentally' bumped into him, spilling juice over his pristine white shirt. Apologizing profoundly she stirred the Alpha to the side, dapping at the spot uselessly with a napkin, patting his shoulder to comfort. "Oh my god, I am so clumsy. I am really sorry." Reaching for his collar, she freed the first button, "Please, just give it to me, I will wash out the juice before it stains."

Steamrolled by the forceful personality of the young woman, Will had a hard time to find the right words, and whenever he tried to pull back, the insistent redhead followed.

"No, please." He stammered, "It's quite alright. I have enough shirts, I will just go to my room and change." Feverishly Will tried to think of a way to get rid of the determined woman, who seemed to have set her heart onto getting him half-naked in the middle of the dining room.

"Cynthia, how nice to see you again." Hannibal's calm voice cut through the worried haze the unwelcome skin-to-skin contact had brought to Will. "Is Markus up already? Or are you trying to enjoy the early morning breeze?"

Pulling back, looking at Hannibal angrily, the young woman snapped, "Markus and I are no longer bonded, Hannibal, as you very well know."

With an enigmatic smile the doctor commented, "He might have said something yesterday. Will you excuse us please?" Turning towards the younger man, Hannibal improvised, "Will, I wanted to show you the beach before the first workshop starts."

Guiding the empath out with a hand at his lower back, the Omega could feel the tension leaving Will, the further they got away from the dining room. Once they were outside, the younger man took a relieved breath, looking at his partner. "How do you feel?" He was very well aware of the tension these young woman's advances had caused him, but Hannibal did not appear to be in particularly high spirits either.

After a moment, the doctor leaned against the railing. "I have to admit that I am not particularly fond of seeing another Omega touching you."

Recognizing the dangerous gleam in the psychiatrist's eyes, Will warned, "Hannibal, you can't …"

Turning towards his Alpha, breathing Will in, allowing the unique scent to ground him, the Ripper shook his head. "I am aware, Will. Don't worry."

When the older man did not open his eyes immediately, Will turned towards him and gently caressed his Omegas cheek. “I did not like her touching me either.” He assured Hannibal before kissing him. After a moment he let go and leaned against the railing once again. “I guess for people like us a holiday on the beach is only relaxing if we have a house to ourselves, with nobody around to bother us and you preparing our meals. I mean honestly, have you tasted the eggs? Gruesome, that’s all I say.”

“That’s because …” Will tried his best to hide his smile when his Omega started an explanation why the eggs on the buffet were less than satisfactory. Cooking or at least talking about it, always put Hannibal’s mind at ease and the Alpha was not above using this tactic to stir the Ripper’s mind away from a potential victim.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The empath enjoyed some time alone before noon. This early the beach was mostly empty, allowing Will to catch up on some light reading and going over the conference’s schedule again. After a light lunch, the profiler decided to sit in on a seminar on deranged, hardened criminals since both Dr. Saunton as well as Dr. Wainwright had shared that they would be there.

Will felt at ease around the small, blonde psychiatrist. Her calm and layback demeanour made her relaxing company and Dr. Wainwright’s insight on dangerous criminals was enlightening. That Hannibal would be there was a pleasant bonus, even when the Alpha kept his distance. The two of them still tried not to make their relationship public. But Will had already eavesdropped on conversations that had pondered about his and Hannibal’s association. The most prominent theory was the younger empath being Dr. Lecter’s mated Omega. Hannibal would surely enjoy hearing this in the evening.

During the afternoon seminar, Will chose a place at the back of the room. Neither of the psychiatrists who accompanied him protested that decision. Regrettably that gave the empath a formidable view of Dr. Markus Rigauld, who once again sat closeto Will’s Omega.

The presentation on the latest break-through in criminal science was very interesting and when the attendants were encouraged to break up into work-groups to discuss what this development meant for their everyday work, Dr. Lecter and Dr. Rigauld joined them.

During this one hour break it became harder and harder for Will to keep his indifferent composure. The proximity Dr. Rigauld was maintaining with his Omega, grated on the Alpha’s nerves and as soon as Hannibal noticed he tried to increase the distance. But the attempt was in vain, since the psychiatrist seemed to be glued to his side.

When a light snack was served in the afternoon, Will watched Hannibal talking somewhat insistently with his dark-haired colleague. When the younger man touched Dr. Lecter again, the psychiatrist took his hand calmly and removed it from his arm before turning around and leaving.

The empath use the opportunity to catch the psychiatrist alone and strolled over. Casually, as if talking about the weather, he asked, “Do you know the advantage of being an empath? An empath, whose job it is to catch serial killers for the FBI?”

It took the other psychiatrist but a moment to put the statement into the right context. Once he made the connection he looked at Will surprised. “It’s you! You are the patient Hannibal had told us about last year!”

“That’s Dr. Lecter to you, and yes, I am.”

Raising his chin defiantly, straightening to appear taller, Dr. Rigauld used every trick in the book to look the dominant Alpha. But Will didn’t allow this posture to distract him. He had dealt with bigger, far more evil Alphas than the good doctor here, so he growled deep in his throat, menacingly stepping closer.

Stuttering the other man pulled back, “You are … you can’t …”

Ignoring the blabbering Will snarled, “The advantage is gathering intimate knowledge of how to hurt somebody, while keeping him conscious. How to injure a man the most, while keeping his heart beating. How to kill someone and most likely getting away with it. And if I see you touching Dr. Lecter one more time, I will introduce you to at least one of these methods. Have I made myself clear?”

Unwilling to let himself be discouraged that easily, the other man puffed up one last time, trying to stab his opponent in the chest, while bolstering, “You have not right to lay claim on him. Hannibal and I were entertaining a regular affair during these conferences every year but the last.” The other Alpha spat out.

Catching the wrist of the psychiatrist, twisting his hand painfully, effectively rending him speechless, Will whispered, “I have laid claim on him in *every* way possible. And you will *never, ever* again touch what’s mine! Are we clear?”

When the other man whimpered from the pain, Will let go, glaring at him until his opponent retreated.

Taking a deep breath to calm himself, Will growled deep in his throat, “You should not be so pleased when I lose my composure.”

Stepping around the corner, approaching his Alpha to take his accustomed position behind his right shoulder, Hannibal smiled at his Alpha. “You can’t fault me for enjoying it, when reflexions from your work mirror in your behaviour, when you are agitated.”

Whipping around, reaching for his Omega’s throat Will growled, “Don’t make the mistake of thinking for one second that this has anything to do with my work, Hannibal.” Effectively blocking the blood-flow of the carotid artery, Will pulled him closer, whispering, “This is me being true to my designation. Ensuring that nobody claims what’s mine!”

Thrilled by Will's dominant behaviour and aroused by his display of ownership, Hannibal tilted his head, baring his throat even more. "We should go to our room. I would very much like to have you in me right now." He purred seductively.

Enjoying the gesture, allowing the display of submissiveness from his Omega to calm him further, Will released the pressure on Hannibal's neck, tenderly caressing his skin. A few months earlier it would have been unthinkable for the doctor to present himself so docilely, but since his Alpha never tried to subdue him, it was easy for the Omega to show himself compliant when the situation asked for it.

A part of him even regretted it, when Will released him, reaching for his neck to pull him down for a demanding kiss. A little bite on his ear made Hannibal shudder, while his Alpha promised, "Tonight, my love. Tonight I will take my time with you, taking your mind from all your former lovers, present or not." And wasn't that an alluring promise.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Staking a Claim

For the rest of the evening, the seat beside Hannibal remained empty. But since Dr. Lecter joined the discussion about criminal master minds and how to poof their sanity, even if they claimed mental illness, nobody cared. Dr. Wainwright and Dr. Lecter were quite passionately discussing topic. Will and Dr. Saunters just leaned back and enjoyed listening to them.

Will was in high spirits, when they finally called it a day. Watching his partner had been particularly entertaining for him. Hannibal's way of proving his points was mostly subtle but almost always indisputable. The profiler had been quite proud and had told him so on their way upstairs. Even if Hannibal had shown no outward reaction to the praise – he never did, being far too proud to appear eager when his Alpha complimented him – his joy radiated thought their bond.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Will stepped out onto their balcony. The evenings were warm and the smell of flowers weaving in was pleasant. The tranquillity of looking over an empty garden helped Will to centre himself. He felt Hannibal at his right shoulder, sharing the moment for a little while, before returning inside.

The doctor had just hung up his dinner jacket, when Will's hands on his shoulder stopped him from opening his tie. The Alpha's touch was warm on his Omega's shoulders. Connecting them, before they trailed down Hannibal's arms, until they reached his hands. The doctor needed very little prompting to approach the bed. Will's promise from the afternoon came to the forefront of his mind and when the Alpha nudged him to lie down, even fully dressed, he did not resist.

Without a word Will crawled onto the bed. Towering over his Omega, illuminated only by the weak light of the autumn moon. Neither of the two had spoken a single word until now. When Will leaned down to capture his partner's lips the doctor's parted willingly. They took their time, savouring the contact, allowing the desire to climb before Will pulled back. In the dim light his eyes looked nearly black and Hannibal couldn't resist to rise to his elbows, silently demanding for them to continue.

But Will only pushed him back, slowly opening the perfect knot Hannibal had tied for him at the beginning of the evening. For a brief moment he looked into his Omega's eyes, but when the doctor didn't react he wrapped the tie around his partner's wrist and tied the doctor's hand to the bedpost. Caressing his partner's neck until Hannibal bared his throat, Will took the doctor's tie as well and repeated the process.

The knots were simple, mere slings and Hannibal's fingers closing around them would keep them secured. They had discovered at an early stage that, while as an Omega the doctor was inclined to please, he had no particular fondness of being tied down. The first according experiment had ended in ripped bonds and Hannibal shivering all over. The way they had

chosen upon later, was quite secure as long as Hannibal was holding on to the bindings, once released the Omega simply had to twist his wrists a little to get free.

It was another proof of the trust they shared that this system worked perfectly. Hannibal had never let go until Will had given permission, and Will enjoyed the willingness of his partner to restrain himself for his desires.

Once the Omega was bound, Will slid down, moving their groins together, eliciting a hiss from his partner. Leaning down, nipping at Hannibal's ear, the Alpha asked softly, "Do you remember what I promised you this afternoon?"

"Yes,"

Nipping down Hannibal's jawline until he reached his mouth, Will hovered, looking into his Omega's eyes. "I do not enjoy the thought of you bedding another."

"I …"

"Shhhhh …" Will's fingertip, caressing the doctor's lover lip, silenced the older man. "You will only speak, unless I am asking you a question."

Swallowing heavily, Hannibal looked up and nodded his consent. Never before had he thought it possible that he would enjoy not being the dominant partner in bed. But with Will, every movement, every touch, the mere sound of his voice was like a caress of Hannibal's body and the Omega felt intoxicated by them.

"Do you like this shirt and trousers?"

Unsure where this was going, Hannibal made a non-committal gesture. These were not his favourite clothes, but they suited the occasion and he liked them. He felt slightly unsure when he heard his Alpha mumble, "Pity." before straightening.

Stroking the doctor's throat and upper chest with the tips of his fingers, never strong enough to satisfy, just enough to make the psychiatrist feverishly wishing for more, the Alpha asked, "Where are you tools?"

When the Omega looked up, unsure about where this was going, Will clarified, "I have watched you this morning. I know what you have been thinking when Cynthia came on to me. You always come prepared. So, where are your tools?"

Nervous all of a sudden, because Will was referring to a mood where the Ripper had pushed to the surface, the psychiatrist took two nervous breaths before answering. "There is a hidden compartment in my suitcase. You have to … if you reach under the inside seam at the top you will find the latch to reveal it."

"Good boy …" Hannibal watched Will closely, who pecked a kiss on his nose and rose from the bed. He was not sure where this was going. What was Will planning to do? He had expected pleasure, not pain, yet with the use of knives, bone-saws or scissors, receiving pleasure seemed very unlikely.

Will took his time, inspecting his partner's collection. All instruments were made of stainless steel, gleaming in the faint light of the moon. He brushed over the handle of each item before choosing a quite inconspicuous knife with a four inch blade. Though small, when entering a body, this tool could cause plenty of damage, but that was not what Will had in mind for tonight. Holding up the tool, he looked at his Omega. Hannibal was not even blinking, his hands were wound around the knots so hard that his knuckles had turned white. Yet his partner did not even seem to consider letting go.

When returning to the bed Will put down the blade, this time out of his partners line of sight. Instantly the Omega tensed when Will reached for his lower legs. But the Alpha only removed Hannibal's shoes and socks. Crawling up again, Will placed the knife at the lowest button of the doctor's dress-shirt. With a fluent motion, the Alpha cut of the first button, letting it slide onto the bed, while explaining, "I will erase all my predecessors from your mind. After tonight the only one you will think about when you feel pleasure will be me."

Every other word, Will had cut free another button until he had reached his Omega's collar.

When Hannibal whispered, "Yes, Will." the Alpha grazed his partner's Adams apple with the tip of his blade, forcing the Omega to supress a shiver that threatened to break to the surface so that he would not injure himself. "That was not a question, my love."

"I'm …" But the cold steel caressing his throat effectively cut off Hannibal's words.

Slowly, the blade cut though his dress-shirt, travelled up towards Hannibal's shoulders. Will's eyes bore into his Omegas when he moved the knife, cutting first one, then the other sleeve from his partner's arms.

Allowing the sharp tip of the blade rest over Hannibal's pulse points, Will asked, "How many, Hannibal? How many did you fuck before me?"

"I …" Gazing at the blade, still pressed against his wrist, the Omega's eyes snapped back, when the younger man growled.

"How many?"

"Six. Some of whom, like Markus Rigauld, repeatedly."

Leaning closer, so that his breath was ghosting over Hannibal's ear, Will demanded to know, "And how many did you allow to take you?"

Shaking his head slightly, Hannibal answered, "None."

Teeth dug into the sensitive flesh of his ear, shooting desire through the doctor's taunt body.

All the while, Will had dragged the blade down, had allowed the cold steel to caress his Omega's strong body and put it to rest on Hannibal's belly while opening his belt. Once the offending piece of leather was gone, the Alpha moved down, caressing the outer thigh of his

partner with the blade, before putting it against the hem of the pants, slowly parting the expensive fabric while moving up.

Hannibal was shivering from need. Never before had Will introduced this kind of toy to their play. Now the Omega had a hard time holding back. The restrains his Alpha had placed on him were the only way he was able to keep himself under control. His fingers were already aching due to the strain he put on them. But he could neither avert his eyes from his partner, nor supress his desire. Will was playing havoc on all of his senses.

Sweet lips brushing over his silk covered hip-bone, made him shiver so strongly that he rattled the bedframe. Luckily Will had put the knife aside when pulling away the linen rags that had once been the doctor's trousers. When Hannibal felt the blade once again on his belly, he looked down worriedly when it travelled towards his groin. There still was a slight possibility that Will would cut him. He had killed people with this tool maybe that was what he deserved.

But just in time before touching Hannibal's rock-hard erection the blade wandered off, cutting through the boxer's waistband, leaving him partially naked. When his Alpha dug his teeth into Hannibal's hipbone, the Omega shouted and nearly lifted the both of them off the bed. He could feel a gush of wetness soaking his partially destroyed pants. He was beyond ready for his Alpha, but had the feeling that Will was not done with him yet.

As expected, his Alpha pulled back and looked up at him with a warning gleam in his eyes. Hannibal tried his very best to get back his control and forced himself relax against the sheets. Once again, he felt the blade caressing his skin. The cold steel touched the inside of his thigh, wandering up until it nearly touched his balls. Will's breath over his partially clothed erection only fanned his desires when the Alpha asked, while slicing the inside seam of the boxers, still careful not to touch Hannibal's most sensitive parts. "And how many will there be from now on?"

Not daring to breathe until the blade had finished it's journey and finally cut through the waistband a second time, leaving the Omega fully naked and exposed, Hannibal shivered profoundly, looking at Will with desperation in his eyes. "None. There will be no one else but you from now on. Will … please!"

Will's words, "Right answer." barely registered in Hannibal's mind since the Alpha had lowered his lips to his leaking erection closing them around it and slowly swallowing it down. Due to the overabundance of adrenalin coursing through his veins it was far too much, too much yet not enough at the same time. Will's lips were wrapped around his cock, but his stimulation was too superficial to bring any release. Frantically Hannibal pulled at the ties that held him down, tried to move his pelvis but stopped when he felt Will's hand on his thigh, the handle of the blade pressed to his overheated skin.

Apparently displeased with his Omega's barely restrained movements Will pulled back, eliciting a whimper from the doctor who looked up at him pleadingly. Placing the blade on the bedside table, Will reached under his partner, sinking one finger into the inviting wetness. A second finger followed, while the doctor remained as still as possible, despite the trembling of his arms.

The moment he pushed a third finger into this partner, angling for the other man's pleasure centre for the first time, Will reminded him, "No one but me. Say it!"

"No one but you." Hannibal confirmed, shuddering from the effort of keeping himself unmoving.

"That's right," Will repeated softly, ghosting a kiss over his partner's chest. "No one but me."

The Alpha took his time stretching his partner. The promise became like a mantra between them, Hannibal repeating it over and over frantically, Will demanding another repetition the moment his Omega's voice was stolen from him due to the desire he evoked with every touch of his hand.

The doctor's mind was clouded with passion the trembling had long since stopped. The pleasure Will caused was never enough to push him over the edge, and his body had not enough strength left to maintain the level of tension indefinitely.

The assurance that he belonged to his Alpha and only to him was governing the Omega's every sentient thought. He wanted to reach for Will, to pull him closer but the constraints on his wrists reminded him that he was not allowed to do so.

When Will reached for his cheeks, turning his head so that Hannibal was looking at him, the Alpha brushed away the tears that had fallen from his Omega's eyes. His lips caressed Hannibal's own when he whispered, "I love you," while finally sinking into his partner.

Unable to hold back any longer now that he finally had his Alpha in him, Hannibal let go of the ties and wrapped his arms around his partner, pulling him as close as possible. "I love you too … I love you so much and there will be no one but you, from now on. No one but you, Will."

Tenderly caressing his partner's head, kissing him once again, Will hushed him, "I know, my love. I know." Before finally starting to move.

Their lovemaking that night was overwhelming for Hannibal's mind, body and soul and once Will was filling him with his seed the Omega followed his Alpha into oblivion. Neither of them was willing to let go afterwards. The two men sank against the cushions, arms and legs still entangled, and within moments fell into a deep and blissful sleep.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

A Boat Trip

Hannibal was inspecting his shoulder the next morning, stating drily, “You bit me.”

“Repeatedly,” Will smiled, kissing said shoulder while gently touching his Omega’s hip, where another dental imprint could be seen. “And you liked it.”

Looking over his shoulder, stealing a proper kiss from his Alpha, Hannibal confirmed, “Indeed, I did.”

Hannibal put away his knife. After zipping up the hidden compartment of his suitcase he looked at his Alpha. “Will?”

“Yes, love?”

Straightening, Hannibal approached him before asking. “Do you really think me inclined of bedding another?”

Sighing slightly Will closed his eyes, putting his forehead against his partner’s chest. Though his Omega touched his shoulders soothingly, he felt Hannibal’s tension, both in his body and though their bond. “It’s complicated.”

“Would you care to elaborate?” the psychiatrist asked.

“I know that you would never betray me.” Will looked up, wrapping his arms around his Omega’s waist. “But sometimes my instincts demand from me to assert my position. I know that it’s a quite primitive reaction but I can’t help it.”

Satisfied with the answer, Hannibal leaned down and kissed his Alpha with unexpected tenderness. “If last night is what comes of it, I would very much like to advise you not to hold back if you feel an according desire.”

After grinning briefly, Will asked worriedly after a moment. “I did not hurt you, did I?”

“Not in any way I disliked.”

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

After lunch all participants of the conference gathered at the harbour. Will had taken part of the final seminar in the morning, watching the other psychiatrists, since a lecture about early detection of psychological dysfunctions, was only mildly interesting for him. Usually, when he got into the minds of people it was already too late but he wanted to be close to Hannibal to see if Dr. Rigauld was trying to approach him again.

After pulling a polo-shirt from his wardrobe, relieved that he didn't have to wear a dress-shirt in the afternoon, Will smiled at his Omega, who had decided on a light linen ensemble that

was accompanied by a scarf. “Are you sure that this will suffice? The wind could carry it away if you don’t bind it tight enough.”

Checking his reflection in the mirror, making sure that, despite his open collar the scarf would hide the bonding bite and his chain, Hannibal stated,” A closed collar and a tie would be conspicuous for a boat-trip.”

Straightening a collar that did not need straightening, Will kissed his partner and said. “Well, I think you look perfect, the flawless picture of a true gentleman.”

Kissing his partner’s hands gratefully, most Alpha’s would not deal so well with the proof of their claim hidden, Hannibal followed Will out of their room. Side by side, they walked down to the harbour and re-formed their little group with Dr. Saunton and Dr. Wainwright before boarding the boat.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Enjoying a cool glass of white wine and a delicious pastry, Hannibal was strolling over the ship, making small-talk with his colleagues. Tough Will was usually not the one for social gatherings, his Alpha seemed to relax more the farther they got away from the shore. The open weaves seemed to have a particularly soothing effect on him, since most people didn't even bother to talk to him. Even Dr. Saunton had changed into a one-piece and lay on the white pillows that dominated the rear of the boat to enjoy the sun silently.

After a brief chat with the captain, complimenting him on the delicious catering, Hannibal claimed a position high above the others. The conversation he overheard however, was distinctively disturbing for the Omega.

"Yes, he is nice to look at, but have you seen how twitchy he is? I would not have taken Dr. Lecter to obtain such a socially awkward partner." One of his elderly colleagues shared her opinion with her friends, their gazing over to Will left no doubt who they were talking about.

A chuckle preceded the words of the other woman. "Well he is nice to show off, even if he barely talks. Maybe he has other, redeeming qualities. Or our good Dr. Lecter simply pities him. He would not be the first Alpha who bonds with an Omega out of mercy."

"Are you really sure that they are bonded? I have not seen a bite on him and he doesn't wear a collar."

Pondering over the question for a moment, the answer seemed self-evident. "His bracelet?"

"Well," the first speaker agreed, "They do gravitate towards each other. I never took Hannibal Lecter for someone who entertains a pet, but with this one I honestly can't see any other reason for his being here."

The stem of the glass he was holding breaking under his fingers, forced Hannibal to retreat. He felt murderous impulses pushing to the surface. That these people did not offer Will the

respect he deserved sat very ill with him. He knew he had done nothing to support his Alpha throughout this weekend. He had always kept his nature, as well as their relationship, hidden. Will had not given any indication either, since he had known how much his Omega detested being seen as a submissive. But that did not give his colleagues the right to belittle Will in such an insolent way!

Had they been in Baltimore, Hannibal would have found a way. A way to hunt them, to bring them down. To kill them for their nefarious mind-set and present them in a way that was worthy of his Alpha. Will would understand. He would not be happy but he would understand. His loyalty to Hannibal knew no bounds. Even when the Omega did very little to deserve it.

The psychiatrist had not realized that his legs had carried him to the rear end of the ship where his Alpha was relaxing in the sun, chatting amicably with the gentle Dr. Saunters. Hannibal had gotten to know the woman as an Alpha as well, but had never paid a lot of attention to her before. She was too soft to be of any interest to him. Only now did he realize how very similar she was to Will, her true strength hidden behind tender words and gentle movements.

When Hannibal was standing before the pair, Will was looking up at him, irritated by the erratic emotions that flickered though their bond. His Omega was distressed, even if he didn't allow it to show. Offering his hand, Will tried to pull his partner onto the bench beside him, getting him closer to calm him down. But instead of sitting beside him, his Omega went down on his knees.

When Will opened his arms, Hannibal sank against him to bury his face in his Alpha's neck. Comfortingly the empath embraced his partner, rubbing soothing circles over his lower back and neck while his Omegas fists clenched and unclenched behind his back. Hannibal's muffled words, "Take it off.", were the first to be exchanged between them. Still, Will hesitated.

"That's not necessary, my love. I …" Will whispered, assuring his Omega that he was alright with keeping Hannibal's secret. Will enjoyed having his Omega at his shoulder, loved broadcasting their relationship, but doing so would make it so much harder for Hannibal to stand his ground next year and the empath didn't want that for him.

"Please." choked the request was repeated.

There was so much need in this one word, that Will didn't hesitate for another second. Taking Hannibal's scarf, he looked into the eyes of his Omega, who sank down on the floor, turning around so that he was sitting between Will's legs. Rubbing his forehead against his Alpha's knee, the Omega took a deep breath and finally relaxed. For the first time Will realized how very tense his partner had been all weekend.

It took Hannibal quite some time in this position to overcome his agitation. He had worn his accustomed mask all weekend, not realizing how much harder it had become, now that he had his Alpha by his side. Will had been all silent support, but not acknowledging their relationship had put an unexpected strain on the Omega. Now, Hannibal finally felt that

everything was as it should be. His colleagues and friends in Baltimore had learned to deal with his designation. These people would as well. If not, what did he care?

Dr. Saunter's soft words pulled him from his musings. "Well, I have to admit that I suspected Will to be an Alpha. But," gesturing towards Hannibal's now very visible mating bite and the omega-chain he wore," I certainly didn't see that one coming. What made you change your mind?"

Revelling in the feeling of Will's fingers scratching his scalp, Hannibal now sat relaxed between his Alpha's legs, using them like armrests. The pose was that of a king holding court, only being disturbed by his sitting on the floor. However, the Omega didn't seem to mind the slightest and looked at Dr. Saunters confidently. "Most people are stupid."

The dry comment made both Alpha's laugh.

"Too true," the female agreed, but still looked at her colleague since she knew that this was only half an explanation.

"My Alpha deserves better than to have one of them as his Omega." Hannibal concluded, before leaning back fully, enjoying the feeling of being surrounded by Will's legs.

The empath however didn't seem to like this. Playfully he pulled his Omega's strands. "I really don't like hearing you implying that you are 'most people', my love."

When a few of the other psychiatrists entered the rear to find a place in the sun, there was an audible gasp when seeing Hannibal on the floor in front of Will. But Hannibal simply raised his chin, looking up, daring them to say anything. During the following hushed conversation, Dr. Rigauld pushed to the front, looking at his former lover scandalized.

"You!" He gestured at Hannibal accusingly. "If you wanted to bond so desperately you could have … I was there last year! We worked before, you could have asked me!"

Looking at his colleague, not bothering to get up from the floor, Hannibal stated dryly, "May I remind you that you were in a relationship with Cynthia during last year's conference?"

Relaxing against Will, the psychiatrist continued, "Anyway, I am exactly where I want to be, and I think my Alpha had already advised you on a course of action regarding our further interaction."

Dr. Rigauld's eyes flew from Hannibal on the floor, to Will, who sat relaxed behind him, to his petite colleague Dr. Saunters, who lay on the floor next to the pair, enjoying both the sun and the unexpected entertainment. Without another word he turned on his heel and vanished into the belly of the ship.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Murder on Water

Hannibal was allowing his colleagues some time to gauge at him. Very few, like Dr. Wainwright, sat with them. Most simply kept their distance, looking at them from one of the upper decks. "Like monkeys in a zoo," Will remarked after a few minutes, making everybody laugh. After half an hour Hannibal got up, asking if someone would like a drink. When Will looked up at him hopeful he smiled and kisses his mate. "Yes, I will see if I can find you a cold beer."

"Beer?" Dr. Wainwright asked.

Will merely shrugged. "Well, I don't pretend that my pallet is as refined as my partners, but the whine here is not to my liking."

"As long as you are refined when it's important, such trivialities should not matter."

When Will looked at Dr. Saunters in confusion, the female psychiatrist elaborated, once Hannibal was gone. "Dr. Lecter, as I have known him, is a very determined man. You have to be incredibly strong, to be able to balance him in a relationship."

After Hannibal had served wine to his colleagues and enjoyed a grateful kiss form his Alpha, for finding him a cold beer, Will remarked, "Stronger since meeting Dr. Lecter."

"How so?", now Dr. Wainwright made his interest known.

Smiling down at Hannibal who sat relaxed at his feet, using one of his Alpha's legs like an armrest like before, Will made an inviting gesture.

"Actually," the doctor started, "I was introduced to Will to create a psychological profile for the FBI to determine if he was fit for fieldwork."

"People don't like me when they psychoanalyze me. But Hannibal … well, he was intrigued from the start." Will added. "Things only got a little complicated from there."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Around seven they returned to the hotel, given ample time to shower and dress before dinner. The two psychiatrists Will and Hannibal had befriended, didn't seem to care about the revelation of Hannibal's designation. Other participants however, kept their distance, whispering behind their backs when Dr. Lecter took the accustomed position of an Omega and kept standing or walking behind Will's right shoulder, looking casually at all of them as if this was nothing out of the ordinary.

Will and Hannibal were enjoying a cold shower when there was a knock at the door of their room. Slightly frustrated they exited the bathroom, only to find two police-officers entering

their room. Without any further explanation, Will and Hannibal were told that they were expected to be in the dining hall within the next five minutes. Only when Will showed his badge, did they share the information, that a dead body had been found in the caboose of the ship they had used this afternoon.

While Hannibal put on one of his accustomed three-piece suits, Will went for his, comfortable clothes. On an afterthought he put on the ankle-holster and his gun. There was a murderer among them, well two actually but Will didn't want to risk anything with the one he was not in a relationship with.

Entering the dining hall with Hannibal behind his right shoulder, he spotted a young detective, freshly promoted his mind supplied, who was talking to the organizer of the conference. All people would have to be questioned separately and their fingerprints would be taken.

Ignoring the looks he drew, Will approached the detective. Yet before he could reach him, Hannibal held him back, urging him in a low voice. "Will, please. Think about this. This is no FBI-case, you do not have to feel obliged to help."

Sighing tiredly, because apparently this would be a very long night, Will replied, "I might not have enjoyed Dr. Cynthia Jantor's advances, but that does not mean that her murderer should not be brought to justice."

"Excuse me," during their conversation, the detective had approached them, looking distrustful. "Care to explain how you know that Miss Jantor is our victim?"

Switching his attention from his Omega to the detective, Will took his time to get a read on the young man. The blond investigator was nervous, though he hid it well. His unease only increased during the few seconds Will used to form an opinion, but then the profiler revealed, "Because she is the only psychiatrist invited to this conference who is not present."

"And you are doctor?" The detective asked.

"I am Will Graham, from the FBI branch in Baltimore. This is my partner, Doctor Hannibal Lecter. He is the psychiatrist attending this conference, I am his 'plus one'." Will smiled, trying to ease the detectives tension since it caused him a headache, simply by standing next to him.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

What followed were long hours of interrogation that apparently got them nowhere, since everybody was back in the dining room around midnight, hungry and cranky. When Will overheard two officers talking about the strange way the dead body had been arranged on the counter of the caboose, the profiler demanded for the detective to call Jack Crawford. If there was anything out of the ordinary he might have a better chance to solve this case by merely looking at the crime-scene than this rookie by questioning them all night.

Around one the detective approached their table, begrudgingly ordering Will to follow him. When Hannibal rose to join them, the investigator held him back. A low growl from the

Alpha made the man pull his hand back from the doctor's chest, and Will stated lowly, "You don't really think that I will leave my Omega behind if there is a killer on the loose?"

"You can't make demands here, Mr. Graham. I only agreed to show you the crime-scene because your boss called my boss!" The detective snapped. "But if it makes you feel better, I will leave a colleague for his protection."

Clearly displeased, Will looked at his partner. Hannibal didn't like the thought of an armed guard, but even less the idea of his empath looking at a crime scene that was clearly not important. Still, Will felt obliged to at least take a peek, especially since he knew the victim, so Hannibal nodded his consent to the proposed arrangement.

After an assuring nod from his partner, the profiler followed the detective, hoping that the securing of evidence had not destroyed his chances of getting into the killers head.

The caboose was a gruesome place. Will had troubles not stepping into the blood, since nearly the whole floor was covered in it. The body of the female Omega that had flirted with Will lay splayed out on the central work-unit, cut open and disembowelled. He heard the detective, beside him, taking a deep breath. Not the wisest choice in a room saturated with the smell of blood. But the young man would learn soon enough. Offering the peppermint-balm he carried in his pocket whenever he was working, Will stepped closer.

Taking a flat breath Will tried to summon the pendulum, but time did not rewind itself. The act of killing had no higher design for Will to see, it was just a mindless, brutal slaughter. Still he got snapshots until both Cynthia Jantor and her killer were standing in the kitchen, arguing. Will opened his eyes and demanded, "We have to go back to the hotel this instant!"

He refused to share his insight with the detective, too worried about his Omega being in the same room as the killer.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

They arrived to shouting in the dining room. Dr. Rigauld and Dr. Lecter were facing each other, and while Hannibal's face showed his usual, emotionless mask, Markus looked positively dishevelled. His words echoed though the hall when he shouted, "You could have chosen anybody! There are several Alpha's in this room suitable as your mates, much better than this jittery, insecure boy! We … *I* would have treasured you, would have invited you into my house and protected you from the world! You could have even helped me with my work. I have substantial resources, you would have lacked nothing! Whatever you desire, I would have given it to you."

"I already have everything I desire." Hannibal's gentle voice could not be any more different from the agitated words of the Alpha facing him.

Still, they didn't calm the other man. Reaching for Hannibal's lapels, the psychiatrist stepped closer. "You can't mean that. What has he done to you? He does not even possess the strength to own you! He …"

A low growl made Dr. Rigauld stop mid-sentence. With a cold look Hannibal ordered, "You will stop to denigrate my Alpha this instant. Will Graham possesses a strength far exceeding yours. You don't even play in the same league as him, Markus."

"Don't you dare." A vicious snarl from Markus Rigauld made the police officer, who had been assigned as Hannibal's protection, step between the psychiatrists. What the young man hadn't counted on, was the erratic behaviour of the agitated Alpha.

The furious man, unexpectedly attacked the officer and took his gun, aiming for Hannibal's head, hissing, "Don't you dare affront me you insolent, arrogant, little Omega!"

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Appearances

Chapter Notes

> Oh my fucking god. THAT'S what I call a season finale, worthy of the show. Absolutely remarkable.
> **********
> **********

The muzzle of a weapon aiming at his head frightened Hannibal to his very core. A feeling he had not encountered since his childhood. Not only was he scared for his own life, but for the mental health of the person most precious to him. If Markus shot him now Will would relieve this situation over and over again to find the precise moment, where he could have acted to save Hannibal, instead of watching his Omega being killed right before his eyes. And Hannibal … well he would be dead and that was not a desirable outcome.

Hannibal tried to remain calm, indifferent to this whole situation, but found that he could not. Averting his eyes as to not agitate his former lover any further, he concentrated on his breathing, slowed it enough so that his heart would not beat out of his chest. There were people surrounding him, police officers who tried to intervene, but despite all of them pulling their weapons on his colleague, well after this surely former colleague, nobody dared to take the shot. Technically, Markus Rigauld had only threatened him until now, apparently that did not merit the use of a weapon.

Too caught up in his own mind to pay attention to the threats around him, Dr. Rigauld was concentrated solely on Hannibal Lecter, accusing him angrily, "You always thought you were something better. But it was just a mask to hide your true nature. You have pranced in front of us, flaunted your superiority, but at your core you are meant to be dominated!" Lifting the weapon a little higher, approaching the doctor threateningly, Hannibal flinched back, trying to maintain his distance. "I could have been the one! If this bitch hadn't seduced me prior to last year's conference I would have been free to claim you!"

Aware that this would not help, the Omega still felt unable to hide this essential truth. He glanced at Dr. Rigauld for a heartbeat. "I would never have chosen you, Markus," Hannibal whispered. "Not after getting to know Will Graham. Not in a million years."

The furious cry of the Alpha predominated the sound of the release of the safety catch of the weapon, Will had pulled immediately after entering the dining hall. The gunshot that followed resulted in breathless silence. Before anybody could gather his wits, Will secured his weapon and offered it to the detective who gapped at him, before approaching his Omega.

Hannibal had tilted his head to look down at the man who had just trailed a gun at him. He didn't even notice the blood that was speckled over his face and upper body. His attention

was solely drawn to the man on the floor, who clutched his injured shoulder, whimpering pathetically. With interest he watched the blood bloom on his pristine white shirt like a beautiful flower.

When Will reached for his neck and pulled their foreheads together, without restricting his view, he came back to himself, hearing his Alpha's whisper. "I promise we can go over this time and time again. But right now these people don't want to see detached interest like Jack. They need to see an Omega who had just been through a traumatic experience that ended in blood."

Looking, really looking at his Alpha, who stood before him, trying so very hard to keep up appearances so Hannibal was save, the Omega gingerly touched Will's lips with the tips of his fingers, breathing out reverently, "You just shot a man for me." He hesitated only for a heartbeat, before wrapping his arms around Will, pulling himself as close to his Alpha as possible. Hannibal trembled from the overwhelming awe that radiated through him, elevated by the knowledge of how unique his mate was.

The others would perceive it as anxiety or stress. For Will that was enough, so he gently stirred his Omega away from all these people.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

When Will reached the elevators, the detective interrupted his path. "We have to keep your gun, question you."

"Tomorrow. The murderer of Cynthia Jantor whittles on the dining room floor, clutching his wounded shoulder. Compare his print to the ones you will find on the knife lying under the counter and you will have proof." Will ordered.

"How did you…"

But the profiler only smiled tiredly at the half-question, before he reminded the detective, "I'm an FBI profiler, remember? It is my job to get into the heads of killers. Even if they are as petty as Markus Rigauld."

"You didn't kill him, despite him threatening your Omega." The detective remarked.

Will only shook his head. "There was no need to kill him. I have everything he ever wanted. Had I killed him without cause, I would have paid for it with my job and most likely my freedom. He is not worth it."

Will pulled his Omega closer, when the older man whined at the back of his throat. The detective took the distressed sound as his queue to leave and returned to the dining room not knowing that all Hannibal wanted, no, needed right now was being united with his Alpha.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

As soon as they had entered their room, they locked the door firmly behind them. In a heartbeat the doctor was upon Will, kissing him hungrily, pulling at his clothes as if every last piece of fabric was offending to him. With difficulty the Alpha was able to calm his enthusiastic partner: At least until he could get rid of his jacket and trousers. The shirt however fell victim to Hannibal's eagerness and once it was gone Will was pushed back onto the bed, his Omega crouching over him like a giant cat.

Neither cared that there was still a blood on Hannibal's face. The man had swept most of it away with his shirt before throwing the stained fabric onto a chair. He would pick it up later, fold it carefully and put it into his suitcase before they would depart tomorrow. This item was now precious to him since it carried the markings of his Alpha's determination to protect him. But right this moment his mind was overwhelmed with the need to show his partner how very much he appreciated and cherished him.

The Omega took his time, worshiping every last part of Will's body, and as expected, the Alpha allowed him full reign over their lovemaking. When the older man finally sank down on his Alpha's cock, Will's strong fingers dug into his hips to keep him still. The adrenalin that had fuelled him for the better part of their encounter was slowly replaced with mind-numbing pleasure. Unwilling to let this end so fast, Will took his time to caress his Omega's body with the tips of his fingers. When he brushed over Hannibal's nipples, the other man leaned back with a moan and presented himself to encourage his Alpha's touch.

When Will's enticing fingers had him panting he slowly started to move. The eagerness and the agitation had slowly ebbed away, leaving them to a slow and unhurried lovemaking. Hannibal moved with the grace of a giant predator, all fluid, graceful motions. Will appreciated the sight but after a few minutes, he joined the movement, pushed up whenever Hannibal moved down, intensifying their contact.

His partner was already shivering from the strain of keeping his weight supported only by his upper legs, when Will finally closed his hand around Hannibal's erection. In slow, languid movements he pushed down whenever Hannibal came up and within moments he had his Omega fighting his impending orgasm. But after everything that had happened today, Will did not want Hannibal to fight. Pulling his lover closer, he stilled his hand, only caressed the cockhead with the tips of his fingers.

"You don't have to restrain yourself. I have seen all of you, my love. There is no need to hold anything back." Before moving his hips up, ploughing even deeper into his partner. His hand clasped Hannibal's cock even tighter.

Losing himself in the moment, mind clouded by the knowledge that Will truly *did* see all of him, still protected him, still wanted him and would never, ever leave, Hannibal sank down, pushed up, shoved into Will's hand, losing himself in the pleasure his Alpha brought him. It didn't take him more than a few moments, to shout out his climax, riding the waves of his orgasm, feeling Will's essence filling him before he sank into his Alpha's arms, trembling from the strain this night had put on his mind and body.

For a long time they simply lay side by side. Hannibal mourned the loss of contact when Will slipped out of him, but cleaned himself and his Alpha as swift as possible, before huddling into Will's embrace. Markus's words still echoed through his head.

After a little while, he asked, "Will?"

Aware of the direction of his Omega's thoughts, the empath answered the question he sensed at the forefront of his partner's mind. "No, I never treasured you, since you're not an object. I never felt the need to give you everything you want, because you are strong enough to get it for yourself. I cherish you working, as it helps keeping me sane. It would be selfish to keep you from other patients who might need you as much as I do. But yes, I will always protect you, no matter the cost."

"How do you always know what's on my mind?"

With a smile, Will kissed Hannibal's head. "Empath, remember?"

After a little while, Will added, "It's also the bond between us. You could know what I think as well if you would try to reach for it."

Not willing to entertain that thought for now, Hannibal remained silent before pondering. "There might be an internal investigation if this incident reaches Quantico."

"I don't care. I only regret that I could not kill him. Seeing him trailing a gun at you nearly made me lose it. But you were afraid, so I knew that I had to keep myself together."

"That has not happened in a very long time," Hannibal admitted. "I didn't want him to shoot me. Even more, I didn't want you to watch him kill me."

Sometimes later, Will asked, "You were quite fascinated when I took the shot, even if it was only into his shoulder."

Smiling up at him, Hannibal nipped at his Alpha's chin, "Psychopath, remember?"

The two of them were on the verge of sleep when Will mumbled, "Let's not do this again, alright?"

"Attending a conference?" Hannibal asked sleepily.

"Have people putting guns to your head."

Aware that this was a plea to not agitate another Alpha again, as well as being safe when Will was not around, Hannibal nodded nearly imperceptible. "Agreed."

With a relieved sigh, Will turned around so that Hannibal could spoon him from behind, confirming, "Agreed."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Recollections

Chapter Notes

> It means "Do not touch me!". I'm sure you will find the part where the translation is needed ;).
> devil_jin, thank you very much for an accurate translation into Hannibal Lecter's native language.

For once Hannibal had agreed to go to accompany Will to a restaurant. Though they attended such establishments when social gatherings occurred, Hannibal rarely preferred the food from an industrial kitchen over his own creations. Yet this place had opened only two weeks ago and everybody in the office was pleasantly surprised by the taste and the quality of the food. Will was well aware that a vegan dinner was not Hannibal's idea of a perfect meal, still he had been able to persuade his Omega to join him. They had agreed to meet at the manor around six and though Will was slightly late, he hated being late, that was just plain rude, Hannibal was nowhere to be found.

After searching the house top to bottom – luckily finding the cellar empty – Will changed before leaving for the psychiatrist's office. As expected the waiting area was already dark. The only thing out of place was a colouring-book that surely didn't belong to Hannibal. Quietly Will opened the door quietly, prepared to retreat should Hannibal attend to an unexpected patient. Even though that did not happen often, it had happened before.

But instead of finding Dr. Lecter with unforeseen company, Will spotted his partner sitting at his desk, his pencil gliding over paper with hurried strokes. "Hannibal?" Will's words were quiet as to not startle his Omega, but the older man did not even look up.

Taking a moment to centre himself, Will looked at the doctor, not watched him but really observed. Hannibal's shoulders were stiff with tension and the usually so precise movement of his hand while drawing was frantic. Several sheets of paper loomed over the edge of his desk but his eyes were only concentrated on the sheet he was currently working on.

When Will slowly approached him and put a hand on his shoulder, Hannibal twisted, wielding his pencil like a weapon, attacking Will while shouting, "Neliesk manęs!" frantically. Thanks to his reflexes, Will caught the arm with the pencil at the wrist, keeping the doctor from hurting him. His other hand reached for the Omega's throat. "Hannibal, come back to me!"

The psychiatrist was breathing hard, blinking several times, and finally found his way back to reality. His breath hitched when he realized the situation he came to, opening his hand to let go of his makeshift weapon. The sound of the pencil falling to the ground was deafening and he closed his eyes, unable to meet those of his Alpha. After everything that had happened

today, the thought of injuring Will was unbearable. Hannibal didn't dare to swallow, out of worry that his Alpha might let him go. Currently Will was the only thing anchoring him to the present.

Will was nearly out of his mind with worry, never before had he seen his partner so beside himself. Hannibal had the tendency to react defensive if caught unprepared, but the Alpha had never seen him like this. Wrapping his arms around his partner, pulling the shivering man in, he felt Hannibal's hands wrap around his waist, buried under the soft fabric of his jacket and his face was pressed to Will's belly, inhaling the soothing scent of his partner.

They remained that way for the better part of an hour. While soothing his partner, Will inspected the sketches Hannibal had produced both in water-colour and pencil, while calmingly rubbing his back or scratching his neck. A beautiful girl was the only theme of these pictures. The water-colour pictures showed her with the same shade of dark-blonde hair as Hannibal and her eyes seemed familiar as well. Her mouth was turned up in a smile and the emotions that emanated from these pictures were those of joy and happiness.

It was different with the pencil sketches. Some of them were so accurate, you could nearly feel the piercing eyes of the girl boring into your mind. Others were twisted, corrected time and time again until the paper had been balled up and thrown aside. The last ones Hannibal had worked on appeared to be a version of the same person, only much younger. The hair had been drawn differently, the face slightly changed, but there were similarities that could not be overlooked.

When he felt his Omega had calmed sufficiently, Will asked quietly, "Your latest patient?" Will knew that Alana had assigned Hannibal a new patient since the doctor had a history of dealing well with those with 'empathic disorders'.

Letting go of Will, but still not forgoing the last of their contact, Hannibal left his arm half wrapped around the younger man's middle while explaining. "Yes and no. She looks similar but these are pictures of Mischa, my younger sister." He gestured towards the water-colour pictures.

Will had not known that Hannibal had had a sister and from the lost look in his partner's eyes, the empath was sure that she was no longer walking this earth, might have even left it under violent circumstances. Yet, the doctor seemed uncharacteristically melancholically so Will helped him put the sketches into one of his portfolios, clean away the art supplies and brought him home.

Once returned to the mansion, Will helped Hannibal to prepare a light snack for them and when they sat on the couch in the living room, watching a fire with a sandwich and a glass of wine each, the Alpha opened his arms and asked, "Do you want to tell me about her."

After a moment's hesitation, Hannibal took the offer and leaned back against Will's chest, looking into the fire as well. His words were nearly inaudible when he admitted, "Yes."

It had been years, actually more than two decades since Hannibal had talked about his little sister. Still, sharing memories of Mischa with his partner had not felt like a burden. He had not held back, had revealed details of her gruesome death, revealed every last detail of the revenge he had executed on her murderers. When he was though, he knew that his partner was able to understand, maybe not approve but definitely understand and for the first time in forever, thinking about his precious baby-girl did not feel like torture but unburdening of something he had kept inside for far too long.

The little girl, his latest patient, had brought back a lot of memories. Memories of his youth in Lithuania, his families estate, his kind mother, his well-educated but strict father and his beautiful, joyous sister. A sister he had been forced to watch die, helpless to come to her defence. Now a young girl who looked so very much like her, would come to his office twice a week, because she had stopped talking two months ago.

Emily Steward had not said a single word during their first appointment. Her mother had not been much better. Oh, she had talked, a lot actually. About her worries for her sensible child. Emily's difficulties in school since she was not talking any longer, and her closed off behaviour at home. Most of the things she had uttered had been lies, a careful construct to conceal a truth Hannibal had yet to unearth. Though he had a suspicion, he did not want to jump to conclusions since a therapy based on the wrong assumptions could do more harm than good. So Dr. Lecter had freshened up his memories on working with children and was determined to get this child into a fruitful dialog during her next appointment.

He was beyond grateful that Will had been able to bring him back to himself after meeting Emily for the first time. Getting lost in his memories had not been a pleasant experience for Hannibal. He regarded his Alpha with newfound respect.

Will not only got lost in his own memories, pleasant or bad, but also in those of others. Mostly those who had committed murder. Even though it sometimes took some time to bring the empath back to himself, he usually needed far less time than Hannibal had needed this evening.

Will had been calm and patient, allowed him to unburden himself by sharing everything that had happened, to his sister as well as everything he had done after her death. Afterwards the Alpha had just urged him into a shower before going to bed, like it had been any other evening.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Dr. Lecter had had Philisha cancel all of his appointments Thursday afternoon, so that he could concentrate on Emily. It would be easy to convince her mother that this was in her child's best interest. Especially since he planned only to charge for more than the accustomed hour. Mrs. Stewart appeared desperate and even more submissive than most Omegas. The little girl had yet to present, but if her parents were her only role-model for Alphas and Omegas, Hannibal was worried for her.

Checking the utensils he had acquired for today, he put everything on the small table by the window and waited for the female members of the Steward-family to arrive. When Mrs.

Steward entered, the doctor acknowledged her with a polite nod, before he crouched down, to get at eye level with his actual patient, "Good afternoon, Miss Emily. How nice to see you again."

After being ignored for the majority of their last encounter, Dr. Lecter counted it as a win, when the little girl's eyes flickered up to meet his, the barest hint of a smile tugging at the corners of her lips. Straightening again, Dr. Lecter addressed her mother. "Mrs. Steward, I think it would be best if I am allowed to work with Emily alone today. You are free to make yourself comfortable in the waiting room and help yourself to some magazines. I assume we will be working for at least two hours. No need for you to stay."

"I really don't think …" the female Omega started, but stopped when her daughter let go of her hand, taking a step closer towards the doctor. Meeting her eyes, the psychiatrist really didn't leave the woman another choice but to leave. He was reasonably sure that she would claim a seat in the waiting area, trying to keep the door to his office open so that she could hear what was happening. She had been a nuisance last time, answering all the questions Hannibal was directing at Emily with half-truths, sometimes even with downright lies. The doctor would not waste his time with a similar appointment. He was here to help Emily so that was what he would do. And for that he needed the child to open up to him instead of being overwhelmed by her own mother.

Though Hannibal had a very good superstition of what was happening in the Steward's home, without proof he could not do anything about it. So he invited the little girl to sit at the table under the window and opened a box filled with crayons in all colours, felt tip pens and pencils. Opening a big sketchbook, he picked up a pencil, pondering quietly. "Maybe we could share. You can draw something on the left side while I am working on the right page?" Since the child was left-handed the arrangement seemed ideal for the both of them.

Not making eye-contact the little girl nudged the box of crayons into Hannibal's direction, only daring to pick one after he had chosen. For the next hour Hannibal spent his time to draw a picture of his patient, where she was standing in the middle of his office, with a colourful dress and a big key in her hand. Emily was doodling: painting flowers, rainbows, a unicorn, a cloud, everything that could usually be found in the picture of a nine-year-old.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Unconventional Therapy

When the hour was over, Emily Steward put away her pencils, looking at the doctor's side of the page. She furrowed her brow a little and tentatively touched the key Hannibal had drawn into her image. Absent minded, Hannibal said while adding shadow to her hair, "I assume I have not told you this. Every young patient that attends my office receives a key so she can lock out the world." When the girls gaze flickered up at him he saw a faint glimmer of hope in her eyes. "Would you feel better if we locked the door, Miss Emily? I am your doctor after all, so I will only do what you feel comfortable with."

For a few heartbeats the little girl seemed to ponder on the question, but then she nodded timidly and opened her hand. With a smile Hannibal rose and fetched a key to his office. As soon as he offered it, Emily snatched it and ran to the door, pushed it close. A giant weight seem to fall from her little shoulders as soon as the door was locked and for the first time she lifted her head and looked around.

Smiling encouragingly, Hannibal invited her, "I have a little paperwork to attend to. Why don’t you entertain yourself and look around?"

Only when the doctor sat at his desk, shuffling though his papers pointedly ignoring her, did Emily dare to roam his office. She reverently touched the decorative objects, seemingly aware of their value. She brushed with her fingertips over the backsides of his books, climbed the ladder to reach the gallery. About half an hour later, where Hannibal had catalogued every look and gesture on her face, he heard her starting to hum quietly.

When the two hours were up and her mother probed the handle of the door, Emily froze, looking frightful at Hannibal. With a sad smile on his face, Hannibal informed her, "I am sorry, but our time together is up. But we will see each other on Tuesday." Nodding seriously, the little girl climbed down from the gallery and unlocked the door. Clearly puzzled the mother scrutinized both the psychiatrist as well as her daughter, but didn't dare to mention anything when Hannibal bid her farewell before addressing her daughter, "Good bye Miss Emily, it was a joy having you here."

Both were surprised, though Hannibal was pleased, when the little girl let go of her mother's hand and hugged Hannibal for a moment before leaving.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The next time, Emily Steward closed the door as soon as her mother had left, looking up at Hannibal expectantly who offered the key with a gentle smile. Once the door was locked, the psychiatrist took his time to greet his young patient. Still not saying anything the girl looked up and curtsied before looking around. Once she was sure that they were alone, she put her hand under the apron and revealed a tiny, plush mouse with a flowery dress to Hannibal.

Considering that Emily's last painting had told him very little about her state of mind, Hannibal encouraged her, "Why don't we draw your little mouse a home and family? Would

you like that?"

Nodding enthusiastic, Emily approached the table they had used last time and opened the sketchbook. "Do you want to draw the little mouse and her mother? Let's choose a colour for each family member, shall we?"

Swiftly he sketched a house with a kitchen, a child's room and a living room, he looked at the colours Emily had chosen for the members of the mouse-family. She took the pink and a light-green pen for herself, offering a black one to Hannibal. "You want me to draw whom, the mother … or the mouse-father?"

Emily nodded encouragingly at the last statement so Hannibal started to draw a rough sketch of a mouse with a neutral expression. "Will you help me to get it right?" Offering the pen to her, he encouraged her to make adjustments before working them in. After nearly an hour they had a pretty house with a timid little pink mouse, huddled into the corner of her room, her mother, snuggling into the corner of her kitchen and the father-mouse standing in the middle of the living room. His face looked slightly vicious, with thick eyebrows and a downcast mouth. His arms were massive and his hands uncharacteristically big. He held something in his hand. Something Hannibal could not even identify but it surely looked vicious.

After half an hour he excused himself under the pretence of having to do some paperwork and left Emily behind to flesh out their picture.

When he returned forty minutes later, the little mouse in her room was hidden behind what seemed like a toy box and the kitchen was partially filled with smoke and a meal was set on the table. The father-mouse in the living room had been adored with uncharacteristically pointy ears that made him look like a bat. The item in his hand now had a long strap dangling from it. The top was adored with a red rim. Hannibal needed very little phantasy to imagine a belt in the father’s hand and the use it was put to.

The mere thought that anybody would harm an innocent little girl made Hannibal truly furious. Still, when he retreated from Emily after looking over her picture, he worked on supressing his emotions, since the little girl had whimpered slightly when he had loomed over her, for a heartbeat allowing anger to course through his veins. He took a place on the green leather-couch that was not too far away from the table where Emily was drawing. "I should not have let my emotions get the better of me. I am sorry Emily, but in a household where such an adorable little mouse lives, there should never be any blood. That is not right."

Putting down her crayon, Emily looked at the doctor for a little while, before standing up, approaching him. The little girl took her time studying her psychiatrist, her brown eyes showing an understanding far beyond her years. After quite some time she seemed to come to a decision, offering the little mouse to Hannibal. When the doctor looked at her questioningly, she stepped even closer, whispering into his ear, "You keep her safe."

Aware of the huge gesture of having been given a cherished toy, Hannibal put her into the breast-pocket of his jacket, so that only the arms and head was visible. When he heard the young girl's stomach growl, he smiled at her and offered his hand. "Do you want me to make you a sandwich?"

When the girl nodded timidly, apparently unsure where this was going, he offered her a hand and led her to the small kitchen that was attached to his office. The room was not more than twenty square-feet and did not at all compare to the kitchen of his house. But it was enough to fix himself a light snack and he always kept sandwich, ham, cheese and tomatoes and after his last heat even peanut-butter and jelly in stock.

The little girl climbed one of the high stools and watched Hannibal with awe when he toasted the bread, spread the peanut butter and painted the face of a smiling little mouse with jelly on top. Neatly, not spilling a single drop of the offered milk, Emily consumed her sandwich and drowned her milk. However, when she jumped down from the stool, both plate and glass in hand to bring it to Hannibal, the glass slid from her hand.

When Hannibal turned around from the sink, where he had cleaned his own plate and glass, he found the little girl standing in the middle of his kitchen, head bowed, arms locked at her side, shivering slightly. Not a single noise was escaping her, only her harsh breathing could be heard. When Hannibal approached her, he heard one single whimper before silence fell again.

Quietly he asked her. "There is a broom and a dustpan under the sink. Will you get them for me?" Hannibal started to picking up the pieces when the items were offered by the shaking hands of a nine-year-old. Cleaning away the shards, polishing the floor with a piece of kitchen-paper so there would be no remnants of milk, Hannibal put everything to order, before returning to the office.

When he shuffled through his drawings, putting the resolved situation behind them, he showed Emily a picture he had painted of her after their last encounter. "I hope you don't mind, but after our last appointment I painted a picture of you. I was wondering if you would like to keep it." It was a colourful and happy picture of Emily in a princess-like dress on a meadow that was laced with colourful flowers.

Finally realizing that nothing would come from her accident in the kitchen, Emily flew towards Hannibal and wrapped her little arms around his waist, clutching onto him fiercely. Though no sound escaped her, the psychiatrist could feel her hot tears wetting his shirt, and he felt the trembles that shook her little body. Tenderly the doctor caressed her hair and waited for the little girl to get herself under control again. This scene had just strengthened his resolve to help her, a broken glass should not scare anybody half to death, least of all a nine year old girl with no malicious intention at all. When Emily was once more composed he offered the picture anew.

When her mother picked her up ten minutes later, the mouse was safely stored in Hannibal's inner pocket and the picture was neatly folded and hidden under Emily's apron.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

A New Victim

It took Hannibal barely two weeks to come to a decision of what to do with Markus Steward. Careful investigation revealed, that his soon-to-be-victim attended a bar every Friday and after nicking the man's tyres, it was not hard for Hannibal to 'offer his support' when he found the man stranded on the highway. The man was so intoxicated he didn't even tasted the heavy sedatives, Hannibal had laced the water with he offered his hitchhiker.

The doctor had no intention of ever allowing this man back home again. Instead he brought him to an empty house, a little out of town, locking him in a cage in a sparse basement that was made for big dogs. He had gone great lengths to install a sound-system in the room where he kept his victim. Everything was dark since Hannibal had blocked the windows, so the man had to rely on his ears alone.

During his appointment with Emily, at the beginning of last week, Hannibal had tried a therapeutically method that was called 'Family as Animals'. With little encouragement he had been able to encourage Emily to draw him a picture of her family and apart from the little mouse and a timid puppy, a huge wolf-dog had dominated the picture. The beast had been drawn vicious and mean with shaggy hair and long teeth that apparently dripped with blood.

If the man had behaved like an inconsiderate beast in live, Hannibal would make sure that he would die that way. During the day and for the better part of the night the room Markus Steward was trapped in was flooded with sounds of the wild. The man himself was not allowed a single stitch of clothing and despite of being held in a cage that was barely big enough for him to stretch out, he wore a heavy leather-collar around his neck that was attacked to a thick chain that held him mostly upright.

Hannibal had put a bowl with water into one corner of the cage and left the man alone for two days after capturing him. On the third day he cleaned him and the cage with a hose and started Markus Steward's training.

Over the course of the next weeks, Emily grew more and more relaxed, while her father regressed to animalistic behaviourism. He was trained to relieve himself only twice a day, receive sustenance in the form of dog-food and was beaten heavily and repeatedly with his own belt whenever he tried to claim back human traits. Markus Stewards appeared to be a fast learner and Dr. Lecter was quite pleased with his progress or more regression in this case. There was but one thing that worried the doctor.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Will was well aware that something was bothering his partner. Usually Hannibal was calm and confident around Will. He never allowed the Alpha to get the better of him, not that the empath tried a lot, just now and then to yank Hannibal's chain a little. But for the last week, when going to bed, the Omega had claimed a place on Will's chest instead of wrapping

around him from behind. He occasionally avoid eye-contact when they were talking and rarely spoke without Will talking to him in the first place.

All these behaviours were classic Omega traits and though the Alpha had enjoyed the sleeping arrangement at first, he had come to the undeniable conclusion that something was bothering his partner. Determined to address the matter, he was slightly put off when he found Alana in their living room when he returned home. It seemed like Hannibal and Alana had been discussing a case and Will was not sure that he liked the way the female psychiatrists face lit up once he entered.

He was sure that he didn't like it, when the two psychiatrists suggested him to talk to the little girl whose arrival in Hannibal's office had indicated the change in Hannibal's behaviour. From what he got the little girl was in therapy because she didn't speak, something Hannibal had successfully remedied at least for himself. But with her mother, who was still Alana's patient, or other people she remained tight lipped apart from an occasional yes or no.

Her main problem, as the two psychiatrists were in agreement about, was her strong empathy. A condition both doctors could relay to theoretically, Will however, had practical knowledge with being overwhelmed by other peoples' feelings. Since the family was under even greater distress ever since their Alpha's disappearance, bot Dr. Lecter and Dr. Bloom wanted to offer their best support and build up the confidence of both women as long as no one was there to beat them down again. When Will looked at Hannibal after that revelation, the Omega lowered his eyes once again, leaving Will with a nasty suspicion.

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When they went to bed that evening, Hannibal once again putting his head on Will's chest, the Alpha slowly carded his fingers through his Omega's hair. After a little while, when the tension didn't leave his partner's body, he asked, "Are you alright, my love?"

Without looking up, Hannibal merely answered, "Of course, I am merely worried about Emily."

Praying for composure the doctor forced himself to relax and sink pliantly into his Alpha's arms. If Will suspected him of having his hands in Mr. Steward's disappearance, he would leave him again sleep on the couch or worse in Wolfs Trap. Hannibal still was sure that he was doing the right thing. Men like Markus Steward who abused both his wife and daughter, had no right to roam this earth. He was nothing more than the animal Emily had painted and deserved to be slaughtered.

Still, Steward was a father, responsible for the wellbeing of two women. Hannibal was reasonably sure that this would turn out to be a repetition of the incident with the dry cleaner where Will had been angry with him for more than a week. He didn't want that again, so he had to make his Alpha believe that everything was alright. But how do you lie to a person that's already in your head?

Hannibal couldn’t keep himself from tensing a little when he heard his Alpha sighing a little before whispering softly, “If you are not ready to answer truthfully tell me. But please, stop lying to me, Hannibal, I don't like it.”

Shivering from relieve, the Omega wrapped himself even tighter around his Alpha, grateful when he felt Will’s warm hands on his skin. When the younger man nudged his chin, he looked up. “You will have to tell me what is going on eventually, you know that.”

“I do. But the time has not yet arrived.”

After a brief pause Will demanded, “Tell me that you know that I love you, that you know that I am on your side, no matter what. I might not always agree with your actions, but I will always have your back. Tell me you know all that, Hannibal.”

Relieved to hear these words again, because no matter what he thought to be true, hearing them always soothed him so the Omega relaxed into his Alpha’s arms, this time in earnest and whispered, “I do, Will. But thank you for reminding me.”

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After receiving Mrs. Steward’s consent, Will attended Emily’s next therapy session. The little girl was tense, hiding behindHannibal when she realized that Will was an Alpha. Aware that they would be getting nowhere with Emily being so tense, Hannibal brought the girl back to their usual table that was once again held their drawing material. Loosening his tie, he unbuttoned the top of his shirt. He allowed Emily to watch, to touch carefully and draw her own conclusions.

In a barely audible whisper she asked, “You are an Omega, like my mum. And he … he is your Alpha, the one controlling you?”

Getting his clothes in order again, Hannibal shook his head. “No Emily, I am nothing like your mother. I am my own person, making my own decisions. No one is controlling me. But yes, Will is my Alpha.”

Hannibal was surprised to find Emily climbing onto his lap, wrapping her thin arms around his neck, looking at Will. Nervously she licked her lips before addressing Will timidly. “Do you hurt him? Do you do with him whatever you want because he is yours?”

The words sounded studied and so very wrong. A mere repetition of a phrase she must have heard her entire life so that she finally had come to believe it to be true. No wonder she was unwilling to open up to anybody if, in her mind, Alphas were out to hurt their partners and that Omegas were mere ‘possessions’.

Slowly Will approached the pair, kneeling before them, reaching for Hannibal’s hand, kissing his wrist. Emily needed to feel that his Omega was not tensing up when he was approached by him. Needed to see for herself that Will was not hurting his partner.

Her eyes roamed over him and the empath could practically see the gears in her head turning. She carefully observed his actions, Hannibal's according reaction, and coming to a decision

when Will assured her, “I would never, ever hurt Hannibal intentionally. He is my Omega and most precious to me. I would do everything in my power to protect him, not because he belongs to me but because we belong to each other. Hannibal is most precious to me and I would do everything to make him happy. That’s how it should be Emily. Never let anyone make you believe otherwise.”

When Emily’s potential answer was drowned by a growl of her belly, Will rose and stepped back. Hannibal had told him that Emily usually renounced her afternoon snack in favour of having him whip something up for her. Will spoke before the two of them could enter the kitchen. “Emily, I think I can help you with your head hurting when you are out because I had the same problem in the past. But I have to get to know you better for that.”

Doubtfully looking up at Hannibal, the psychiatrist suggested, “Would you allow me to show Will our pictures?”

Pondering the request for a few seconds, the little girl nodded solemnly before demanding. “But they belong to the doctor. I drew them for Hannibal.”

Raising two fingers, Will promised, “I will not take a single one of them.”

Once he was sat up at Hannibal’s desk, the doctor and his little patient vanished into the kitchen. Will was shocked, infuriated and horrified when studying Emily’s paintings. It didn’t take him long to come across the one with the mouse, the puppy and the wolf.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Rightful Punishment

Once Emily's stomach was satisfied, the three of them sat at the couch in front of the tall windows. Hannibal, usually not in for public displays of his status, had chosen a place on the floor, relaxing against Will's leg. Both man realized that their interaction was under close scrutiny. Emily loosened up the more she realized that Will would not snap all of a sudden and hurt his partner. Reluctantly she told Will about the images in her head when she walked the corridors of her school.

Aware of how demanding an empathic gift could be, Will and Hannibal supplied basic techniques to help Emily to push other people's emotions out of her mind when the world was overwhelming her. A lot more work needed to be done until she was safe in her own head, but Will was reasonably sure that Hannibal would be able to help her.

Short of the end of her therapy session Emily excused herself and Will and Hannibal allowed her to catch them in a tender embrace upon her return. Timidly the girl asked if Will would join them again on Tuesday and when the Alpha answered confirmatory, she smiled at him before hugging the doctor good bye.

Emily's mother reacted even less favourably than her daughter when seeing Will in the psychiatrist's office. Having been relaxed while waiting, she started shivering when meeting the Alpha's eyes, retreating instantly, hunching her shoulders while pulling her daughter behind her back protectively. At Hannibal's unspoken request, Will retreated into the office, allowing the psychiatrist to deal with his patient's mother.

Once the Stewards were gone, Hannibal took his time to write a summary of this session, before the two of them left the office. Just like Jack at a crime-scene, Hannibal asked, "What did you see?"

It really wasn't any different. Will's insight provided valuable information. The only difference was that looking at Emily the empath had not seen murder, not yet. Still he shook his head. He was not willing to answer any questions until his own curiosity had been satisfied. "You know where her father is."

When, after hesitating briefly Hannibal nodded, Will ordered him, "Drive, I will accompany you tonight."

Apparently Will was aware that Hannibal had taken time off both in the morning and after work. He didn't ask why his Alpha had not mentioned it before, just heeded the request. It seemed that now was the time to be honest.

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The house Hannibal drove them to, was abandoned, but when they entered it turned out to be fully functional. It would make an interesting crime-scene, Will was sure of that. Following his partner to the cellar, the Alpha kept his distance when Hannibal freed the man. Dutifully the former man emerged from his cage, whining pitiful since Hannibal only granted him half of his attention, the majority of it still concentrated on his own Alpha. Still when Will didn't intervene the Chesapeake Ripper went through his evening routine with his soon to be victim. He fed him, left him free to roam the area behind the abandoned house, rewarded him when he returned dutifully.

For more than an hour the psychopath interacted with the regressed Alpha, before locking him up again.

Upon their return home, Hannibal went to the kitchen to prepare dinner. Will joined him, claiming his armchair, watching his Omega.

Unsure of the direction Will's thoughts were going, Hannibal just put on some soothing music while preparing coalfish with green onions, boiled potatoes and a white sauce. His Alpha remained silent.

Once dinner was served and both had enjoyed a glass of white wine, Will finally spoke. "You can't keep him, Hannibal."

"I am well aware of that."

Elaborating, Will explained, "He is looming like a black cloud over Emily and her mother's head. The little girl I have met today is so full of hope and supressed desire to be happy it's painful to watch her. She is holding back because she is scared that her father will come back and drag her and her mother back into hell."

Confused about what his partner was implying, Hannibal asked, "What do you suggest, Will?"

Looking into his Omega's eyes, aware that he would carry this decision though until the very end, Will ordered, "You made him an animal, now euthanize him."

Freezing, the next bite of their dinner hovering in mid-air, Hannibal felt the need to confirm his Alpha's order. "Are you ordering me to kill a man?"

Taking a sip of his wine, as if this was a conversation they were having every other day, Will nodded. "I do, and maybe you want to invite the Stewards to dinner on Friday."

There was but one order in Will's words, but Hannibal allowed the excitement about it to wash over him, to fill him to his very core. His Alpha was not only approving of what he had done, no, he was encouraging him to see it though. When the ecstasy slowly ebbed away, the Chesapeake Ripper looked at his Alpha and stated quietly, "I would very much like to make love to you right now, Will."

Enjoying both the insight his empathy granted him and the sheer, overwhelming joy that flooded towards him from his Omega, Will carefully placed his cutlery on his plate, Hannibal

had thought him impeccable table-manners after all, and reached for his Omega. “There is plenty of table left unused. I am sure we can find a way of making good use for it.”

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Never before had Hannibal thought that he might enjoy the view of his dining room while being bent over the table and taken from behind. Still he loved every minute of it. Closing his hands around the table’s edge for leverage, he pushed back against his Alpha, keening when the younger man hit his most sensitive spot again and again and again. He was nearly delirious with want when he felt Will spilling inside of him. Though he felt the overwhelming relieve of his Alpha, he keened lowly, since his mind was still clouded by unfulfilled desire.

Only Will’s hands kept him flat on the table, when the younger man sank to his knees behind him and nibbled his way over his back, down to Hannibal’s backside, where he licked and sucked the proof of his passion right out of his Omega. Shivering from the sensation, the older man didn’t offer any resistance when Will pushed him onto the table fully, so that his arse was elevated delectably. His Alpha made good use of this new position, plugging deeper inside of him, while lovingly caressing Hannibal’s cock.

But slow and easy where the furthest things from Hannibal’s mind. In reckless abandon he shoved back against Will, determined to get as much of his Alpha as possible. He moaned in relieve, when he felt one dexterous finger enter him, swiftly followed by a second and a third. When Will curled them in a ‘come hither’ motion, Hannibal couldn’t keep his sounds to himself. He was pleased when Will pushed him down and turned him onto his back before swallowing him whole.

Was followed was surely the longest and most teasing blowjob in history. Still working inside of Hannibal’s backside, the empath did just enough to keep his partner on the edge of desire, not allowing him to tumble over it. The Omega was far too gone to protest, to think of another way to fulfil his all-encompassing need, all he could do was lay splayed out on his own dining table, naked from the waist down, still wearing his dress-shirt and his tie. When Will finally coaxed his orgasm out of him, by relentless teasing of his fingers and breathing adoring compliments of how very good and unique and special Hannibal was over his cock, the doctor’s mind whitened with the strength of his peak and lost consciousness soon thereafter.

He came around to soft fingertips brushing over his now naked belly. Will had relocated his plate and was now sitting right by Hannibal’s side, occasionally trailing his fingers through the mess the doctor had made of himself, savouring the taste. At the doctor’s inquiring gaze, the younger man merely smiled, “You told me not to lick the dish, so I have to use my fingers. Or do different rules apply when you are the plate?”

Chuckling lowly, because that definitely was a thought that has never crossed his mind before, Hannibal decided, “Nantaimori, only include sushi to be served.” Turning around after Will had cleaned him with his napkin, Hannibal chased his Alpha’s lips before deciding quietly, “For you, however, I might think about an exception to this general rule. But the

appropriate arrangement of the food might prove difficult, if you expect me to serve both as your cook and your plate."

Lovingly caressing his Omega's face, Will assured him. "I am sure we can find a solution for that as well," before helping Hannibal off the table. After reheating his dinner, the doctor enjoyed his own portion before following Will to the bedroom. When he lay draped over his lover's chest once again, Hannibal asked, "So there are victims you can approve of?"

"No my love, but there are people I can't approve tainting this earth. So I am willing to accept that something has to be done about them." And with that Will pulled Hannibal closer, kissed him lovingly one last time before succumbing to sleep. They would have a long week ahead of them, no use in forgoing restful sleep as long as he could get some.

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Man or Beast

With Will and Hannibal's help, Emily learned to 'mute' her gifts in public. The longer her father was absent, the more relaxed the girl became, especially now that she saw how an Alpha-Omega-relationship was supposed to work.

Her mother, cared for since the family was well off, had still dared to attend a few job interviews and received a part-time job at the FBI-headquarter. She was supposed to catalogue and store evidence, a solitary job she very much enjoyed. Spending most of her time alone agreed with her and evidence was much faster to be found, now that the storage unit had a caretaker.

She had even allowed Will to drive her to Emily's school and Dr. Lecter's office, when her car broke down one rainy afternoon. Will counted it as a huge win when she maintained eye-contact during their conversation in the car.

The family seemed far better off without their Alpha. So Will hadn't thought about Markus Steward a lot, until the local police called him one evening, announcing that they wanted to talk to Hannibal Lecter's registered Alpha, since they could not reach the doctor himself.

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Hannibal had put much effort into Markus Steward's re-education but very little into his killing. As Will had demanded, he killed the man quite merciful with a lethal dose of Pentobarbital. But not before sedating him and cutting of his right arm. Cauterizing the wound after the amputation, Hannibal drove the man to a rest area on the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway that had quite a history with abandoned animals before returning to his office to see his first patient of the day.

Being chained down, shaggy with unruly hair and marred skin the man had looked every bit the animal Emily had drawn him in advance.

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When Will arrived at the police station, he found both Mrs. Steward as well as her daughter in one of the interrogation rooms. When he asked the reason for that – surely nobody would think that either Steward woman had her hands in Markus Steward's disappearance – he was brought to the observation room attached, where he could see the mother doing her best to cope with the hysteric fits of her daughter. What shocked the profiler was Emily clutching a photo of her father's crime-scene, the girl should have never gotten her hands on.

Ashamed the detective next to him admitted, that he had had these pictures on display on his desk, and when he had talked to the mother, the little girl had wondered off during her toilet break since the officer accompanying her had been called to the phone.

Emily's piercing shrieks had deafened half the precinct and nobody had been able to calm her down since. So she and her mother were currently in the interrogation room. Emily rampaging, violently fighting her mother off who tried to calm her.

After waving his badge, Will was shown the pictures and a horrible suspicion came to mind. Placing a call to Hannibal's cell phone he requested to be called once the psychiatrist was free.

After a brief chat with the captain, where he explained his relationship with Emily and her mother, he was allowed to go to them with an officer at his side. When the men tried to be helpful and hold Emily so that she would not continue to hit her mother, Will growled lowly in his throat. The last thing Emily needed right now was forced contact. Instantly six eyes were glued to him.

Looking menacingly at the officer, he approached Emily and opened his arms to her. Instantly the girl climbed into them, holding on to Will for dear life, whispering into his ear, "They can't take Hannibal away. Tell them they are not allowed to. He is my friend. He saved us!"

When asking her mother why the little girl was all worried about his Omega – hopefully there was a rational explanation for her fears – she revealed that the officer had told them that Hannibal was not available to them. Emily had just misunderstood, Will realized with tremendous relieve.

So he promised, "Dr. Lecter is seeing a patient. We will meet him as soon as he is finished. Alright?" Emily sniffled, but reluctantly let go of Will and allowed her mother to hold her. Mrs. Steward decided that it would be best to go and take a deep breath in the local park.

When Will tried to leave, he had to talk to Hannibal about this situation, Emily reached for his hand. Never before in her therapy had she been as tactile with the Alpha. But due to the stressful situation she obviously felt the need to hold on to someone. Will allowed it, even offered a calming smile.

The empath had no troubles visualising the images that had come to Emily's head, when she had seen the pictures of her father's body. They resembled the drawings she had made, leaving her to come to but one conclusion. Will had not thought her empathy to be so developed that she could derive behavioural patterns for persons she knew. Obviously he had been wrong.

Half an hour later Hannibal called. Since he was overheard, Will only told him about the tragic loss the Steward women had suffered and that Emily needed to see him.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

At the office Emily clutched onto her psychiatrist like a little octopus, unwilling to let him go. So Hannibal comforted her wordlessly while talking to her mother about the best way to

help the little girl through such a tragic loss. When her child's therapy was decided upon – Emily would continue to see Hannibal for the immediate future twice a week for two hours – she wanted to go home. Emily however was clearly reluctant to let Hannibal go.

Will offered to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and left the room, hoping that Emily would calm down while eating. No more than five minutes had passed before the little girl entered the kitchen. Surprised to see her away from Hannibal, Will looked at her when she climbed her usual chair and motioned for him to come closer. Abandoning the sandwiches Will leaned over the counter so that the two of them were head to head.

In a quiet voice Emily asked, "You love Hannibal, don't you?"

"Very much so," Will assured her.

Fidgeting with her fingers, Emily continued her inquiry. "If he did something really, really bad, would you still love him?"

Brushing a lose strand of hair over her right ear, proud of her when she did not flinch away, Will assured her, "There is nothing Hannibal can do that would make me love him any less." Aware what was troubling her, he continued, "We belong together. To me, nothing else matters. Do you think that Hannibal had done something bad?"

Pressing her lips together she nodded, tears started to fill her eyes.

"Then we have to protect him together. Don't we Emily?" Will offered a handkerchief and she blew her nose very quietly. Maybe crying would have caused more punishment in her past and for once Will wished that he could have been the one to kill this abusive bastard, slowly and painfully.

His low growl made her look up, gently cupping her cheek he whispered, "Hannibal is my Omega. There is nothing I wouldn't do for him. Will you help me, Emily?"

Looking at him with in surprise she nodded before staging matter-of-factly. "You know. And you want me to not say anything. Like Hannibal doesn't want me to talk about the bad things I see from my classmates and teachers in school because it's rude. No matter if they hurt one another or cheat or nick food at lunch."

Relieved because for this little girl it seemed so very simple, Will nodded. "Yes, that's exactly what you to do. Could you Emily, for us, Hannibal and me?"

Nodding again, she blew her nose once again, before disposing the handkerchief, leaving Will to care for the sandwiches.

Once there were enough for the four of them, Emily pulled a bottle of milk from the fridge and placed it on the tray. Looking at the arrangement, deciding that napkins were needed, she spoke again while folding them neatly. "You said that you see what bad people do for living. Didn't you?"

“Yes, that’s my job for the FBI. I look at crime scenes and find out what the bad people are thinking, so that we can stop them from hurting others.”

“How do you make it stop?”

With a deep sigh, Will gently caressed Emily’s hair and whispered, “I don’t know, Emily. But once I find out I will tell you. I promise.”

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Back at the office, sandwiches and milk were distributed and at her own request, Emily was allowed to use Hannibal’s desk for drawing, leaving the grown-ups to discuss the consequences of her father’s demise. Hannibal suggested a few combined therapy sessions for mother and daughter, suggested to coordinate with Alana Bloom.

Before mother and daughter left, Hannibal invited them for dinner on Friday, hugging Emily as was now their accustomed good-bye. Once the women were gone, he pulled a piece of paper from his pocket that Emily had sneaked in there.

Will had shifted through the papers on his desk, putting away the drawing material, and looked up when Hannibal presented Emily’s drawing. The hasty picture showed the little girl, recognizable by her hair and her dress, her mother, always with the same hairstyle and handbag and Hannibal with dark angel’s wings hovering over them.

“It seems that Emily sees me as a kind of guardian angel.” Hannibal noticed, offering Emily’s file when Will asked for it.

Shifting though it to find the picture of her father as a black wolf-dog, Will set it aside with a smile. “A guardian angel she is willing to protect.”

When Hannibal looked at him, the empath lifted a picture Emily had put a lot of time and effort into. The mouse and the puppy looked like those of her initially painting. The father however now was a golden lion with blood-dripping teeth and vicious claws. There was no similarity between the male in the original painting and the current one.

“Did you ask her to do that?” Hannibal inquired.

“No, I just asked for her help me protect you by keeping silent, when she made it clear that she didn’t want you to be condemned for her father’s murder.”

Surprised the psychiatrist raised his eyebrows.

Shaking his head, Will gave back the file so that Hannibal could put it away again. “I didn’t have to tell her. She is much better with her empathy than the both of us had anticipated. She saw your involvement the moment she got her hands on a picture of the crime scene.”

“We might have to address this during Emily’s next appointment. It's quite an uncommon situation we found ourselves in, relying on the silence of a nine-year-old girl.”

Putting his arms around Hannibal's waist, Will kissed him briefly. "We are uncommon people. We should be used to this by now."

Relieved that his Alpha was approving of his latest activity, Hannibal reciprocated the kiss, before stepping back. "We should go home now, I have some meat in my fridge that needs preparing, since we will have guests on Friday."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

A Dinner Party

Their guests were expected at five and Hannibal wanted to have everything prepared before then. A host held up in the kitchen was quite rude after all. His partner however seemed to have decided to make the preparation of the food a challenge for him. Having seen his last patient out around three, Hannibal had returned home and immediately set to work. When Will arrived shortly before four, the Alpha went to his routine of changing into casual clothes, before keeping him company in the kitchen. Usually Hannibal enjoyed the attention when he was cooking, today it was distracting.

Will had been very polite, complimented on the new floral arrangement on their dining room-table and had accepted gratefully the glass of wine Hannibal had offered. But now his Alpha was standing at his back, not touching for now, just hovering so that his warmth was seeping through Hannibal's thin dress-shirt. Slightly irritated at the proximity, Hannibal explained while cutting the vegetables. "In many cultures, cooking is considered a form of art." Implying that a master at work should not be disturbed.

The Omega shivered when the warm breath of his Alpha caressed him, when Will confirmed, "It surely is in your kitchen. I love the way watching you focus on your cooking, you look so very … delectable."

Hannibal groaned and clutched the edges of his cutting board when the last word was accompanied by a fleeting kiss to his neck. "You are making it very hard to do my best, my dear."

Hands hovering over his shoulders, barely there, just within reach but not touching for now, Will whispered, "I could leave you alone, but honestly, I would prefer to remain just where I am. Can you concentrate? I am sure I could make it worth the effort."

With a low groan Hannibal picked up his knife again, focussing on peeling and cutting the vegetables in even strips. At the same time Will was finally putting his hands on his back. Right over his shoulder blades, granting his partner a barely there touch, savouring the feeling of the movement for a few moments before slowly moving lower. "Please, explain to me what you are doing."

Talking helped, a little at least. It also allowed Will a perfect measuring instrument of how much his touch was affecting Hannibal. The Alpha caressed the back of his partner, toyed with the hem of the apron, kneaded the doctor's shoulders and trailed the tips of his fingers over Hannibal's upper arms, only to pull back when the older man needed to reach for something.

When Hannibal accidentally burned his hand with sputtering oil, Will picked it up and licked over the wound. Not stopping there, he nibbled on each finger before returning the hand to his owner, the doctor nearly forgot to pull the meat from the cooker in time. When everything went into the oven and the side-dishes were simmering on a low heat, Will opened the apron, letting his fingers travel to the front of his partner's pants. Hannibal's breath hitched, when

calloused fingertips touched his desire confined by his trousers and for a moment the Omega pondered to mount his Alpha in the middle of the kitchen.

But inconveniently, the doorbell rang right this moment. Taking his time for a passionate kiss, Will suggested, “I will see to the door while you change?”

Aware that there really was no way of fulfilling the desire Will had ignited during the last hour, Hannibal nodded before retreating to his bedroom. Locking himself in his bathroom, the doctor looked into the mirror, starring at his reflection. He looked positively wretched. A part of him wanted to strangle his Alpha for his little game, but the desire coursing through his veins drowned this wish. Images of him pushing Will onto his kitchen island, crawling after him just to mount him right there, were at the forefront of his mind.

Splashing water to his face, bringing himself to order, Hannibal was surprised to realize how very much he had come to long for his partner’s touch. Not because of the game Will had been playing with him, but ever since they had started this relationship, Hannibal had begun to realize how very alone he had been in the past. Never allowing someone close, never opening up, simply because there had been nobody to understand him.

Now there was someone at his side, someone who took everything he had to offer in strides. Not condemning but understanding. Someone who could enjoy his kitchen even when he was preparing human meat. Someone who had encouraged him to do so in the first place, at least this time. Someone who was there, without reservation, not perfect, not always without fear or anger, retaliating when deceived, punishing when it was needed, but in the end always by his side. Reaching for his burgundy V-neck shirt, Hannibal chose one of his casual suits and changed to welcome his guests.

When he came down Will smiled at him with an adoring look in his eyes. “I like the colour.” Before showing Emily the harpsichord in the living room.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The evening unfolded pleasantly. Emily was incredibly well behaved and felt comfortable enough to make conversation. After dinner she was allowed to use the cembalo and surprised both Hannibal and Will by how well she splayed. Apparently her music teacher had been the only other person she had talked to in the past since the woman had offered her free piano lessons.

Once Will and Hannibal had seen their guests out, the Alpha turned to help with the cleaning. Hannibal however had other plans. The younger man had touched him numerous times during the evening, small, teasing contacts that had convinced the Omega’s body that he would be taken very soon. All through dinner he had kept himself rigidly still, so that he would not fidget in his seat. Now he wanted Will to finish what he had started.

Hannibal did not see the smile his growl evoked, when he approached Will from behind, when the Alpha was picking up their glasses to bring them to the kitchen. “You have been extraordinarily tactile this evening.” The Omega crowded his Alpha against the sink, burying his face in Will’s neck.

Leaning back slightly against his Omega, Will briefly tilted his head to give him better access before turning around. “I didn’t hear you complain.”

Reaching for his Alpha’s lapels, pulling the young man closer, the Omega rumbled, “Not if you plan to see this though.”

Leaning back slightly so that their crotches touched, Will smiled. “I do indeed.” Savouring his Omega pulling him closer, bestowing a passionate kiss on him.

For a few minutes the Alpha allowed the close contact. When he felt Hannibal’s heart rate increasing, he pushed him back, placing his palm over the other man’s heart, wandering up until his hand closed around the Omega’s throat. “But not like this.”

Taking the initiative, Will pushed back until the doctor felt his kitchen island at his back. Thrills lightened up every nerve in his body, when the Alpha ordered silkily, “Turn around.”

Barely able to supress his excited shivers, Hannibal turned, feeling Will’s hand first on his throat, then on his neck pushing him down. When he placed both hands on the working surface for leverage, he became aware of Will pulling free his belt, opening his trousers. When he felt his Alpha’s hand on his now unprotected backside, he exhaled sharply. All evening his body had prepared for this, so he was wet already. Yet it seemed that Will was still not satisfied.

Nipping on Hannibal’s ear the Alpha demanded. “Give me the oil furthest to the right.”

When handing over the amber liquid, Hannibal felt the need to point out. “That’s white truffle oil, it’s …” He choked on his own words when he felt a small rivulet hitting his exposed lower back. Slowly Will dragged his fingers through it, allowing the oil to travel south, rubbing it into Hannibal’s skin. It’s luscious and rich smell started to saturate the air when Will pushed one finger into his partner once before letting a second follow.

Scratching the steel surface with his blunt nails, Hannibal didn’t know if he wanted to pull away or push into the unexpected contact. Despite having been on edge all evening, he had not been stretched and though he was relaxed when an Alpha was around who was willing to take him, two fingers still were a lot to begin with. When Will added a third soon thereafter, Hannibal bucked up. But the Alpha held him down by his neck.

Working the older man loose, willing to allow strain but not suffering, the empath demanded to know. “Do you want me to pull back? Should we go up and I go nice and easy on you? Stretch you slowly, casually and take my time before taking you?”

With a vicious snarl Hannibal shoved back. The last thing he wanted right now was slow and easy. But all he got for his defiance was a sharp slap on his backside, before Will continued right where he had been so rudely interrupted.

In but a few minutes the Alpha had his Omega panting for more. Not that Hannibal would ever allow himself to voice his desire. But Will could feel it, the tension under his hand, the urging motions around his fingertips, the barely concealed need that was transmitted though their bond.

Teasing a little more, he leaned over, plastering his mostly clothed front to Hannibal's naked backside, whispering into his ear. "If you are nice and say 'please', I might be willing to take you."

"Will!"

Aware that this suffocated demand was all he would get from Hannibal, the Alpha nipped at his ear before deciding, "I'll let that count." And with one, swift motion he buried himself into his Omega, right up to the hilt.

Overwhelmed by the sudden contact, Hannibal lost his hold on the steel counter. Fervently scrambling for purchase he tried to push back into his Alpha, only to feel Will's fingers digging into his neck. Growling dangerously low, the Alpha informed him, "You will take what I give you, when I give it to you. Tell me you understand."

Closing his eyes, taking a deep breath, Hannibal confirmed as demanded, "I understand."

"Then get into position again. I'm not in the mood to wait."

Pushing himself up, Hannibal placed his hands on the steel counter again. Will only allowed him half a heartbeat to get his bearings before he started to fuck into him viciously.

The forceful pushes drove the doctor forward until he stood plastered to his working area. His own cock was trapped painfully between his own body and the cold surface, still he loved every second of it. It was quite rare for Will to take such absolute control. But Hannibal revelled in the strength of his Alpha, until he felt dizzy with desire. When he reached for his cock, Will slapped his hand away.

"You will come like this or not at all!" The Alpha told him, and the Omega had troubles to swallow down a pitiful keen.

Will however, had not intentions of letting his Omega unsatisfied. Pulling Hannibal's hips back, allowing just the barest hint of contact at his partner's cock, he changed the angle, again and again until the doctor was crying out in pleasure, scrambling once more to gain some leverage. Once his partner's most pleasurable point was located, Will attacked it mercilessly, pushing Hannibal over the edge with experienced movements, following him into the perfect bliss after a few heartbeats once the doctor had spilled his seed over the steel counter.

Only Will's arms kept Hannibal upright in the first few moments after his climax. Pliant and dazed the doctor felt Will lowering them to the floor so that they could catch their breath. Reaching for a fresh dish towel, Will cleaned Hannibal tenderly. For more than half an hour the two sat boneless on the kitchen floor.

When Will finally pulled Hannibal up, they cleaned the counter together, before taking a shower. Once in bed, Hannibal pulled Will closer, falling asleep once again firmly wrapped around his Alpha from behind.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Same old, some new

Another serial killer, meant late hours at the FBI-headquarters and at new crime-scenes for the profiler. Hannibal's most obnoxious Alpha patient back in therapy meant strenuous appointments for the psychiatrist. All in all, life didn't treat Hannibal Lecter's very well. After a week, where he had spent two nights on Will's couch in the FBI headquarters and two more in Will's (now slightly more comfortable, but still not up to his standards) bed, Hannibal decided that he had had enough. They were supposed to see Emily and her mother around ten the next day and Will still hadn't returned from headquarters yet. It was Saturday eleven-thirty in the evening and his partner was still working.

So Hannibal took matters into his own hand. He drove to the FBI-headquarters to kidnap his Alpha. Will, being overly tired gave in easily. Not more than an hour later, the two of them lay in the luscious bed of Hannibal's manor and Will was already snoring away softly. Finally able to breath easily again, after feeling uneasy for an entire week, Hannibal followed him into the realm of dreams.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The next day, Hannibal rose to prepare an opulent breakfast for his Alpha. Will easily consumed every single dish his partner put in front of him. After six days at the office, the profiler could not even remember when he had last eaten something as delicious and satisfying. Both were in high spirits when they went for the carnival where they met the Steward-women.

Since it was the beginning of the summer, both men had chosen shirts and light trousers. The afternoon promised a lot of sunshine and now that Emily was getting better every day, she was a bundle of energy who had made the two men promise to see every fair with her. Hannibal had briefly pondered on putting on a dress-shirt to hide his mating-bite and the necklace, but since none of his patients had family, at least no children, he thought it highly unlikely to run into one of them. So the four of them enjoyed a few carefree hours at the carnival.

Of course everything being nice and easy for once was too much to ask for. After lunch Hannibal ran into the patient that had taxed his patience already for two hours this week. As it was his custom, Mr. Tailer wore light-blue trouser with a canary-yellow shirt that made Hannibal's eyes water. When the man greeted his psychiatrist overly friendly, his eyes dashed instantly towards Hannibal's mating bite.

When Will approached with drinks in hand and Emily and Mr. Steward by his side, Hannibal took step to the side, so that Will would not put his arm around him as he had clearly intended after offering the drink. The psychiatrist realized that his opponent noticed the gesture and narrowed his eyes at him, before introducing himself to Will most jovially. Hannibal appreciated very much that Will did not once try to step in front of him to shield him from the other Alpha despite him picked up on Hannibal's unease. Once Mr. Tailer was

gone, Will merely took a sip from his drink and prompted Emily to go and look for sea-gulls once she was finished with her hot-dog.

The empath blamed it entirely on his lack of sleep and agitation the current killings had caused him, but he honestly had a hard time not going after that stupid Alpha. This man did not have the slightest right to judge Hannibal's laid back demeanour before. What was it to him how Will's Omega behaved in public? If he didn't want to be touched by his Alpha so be it. Nobody had the right to criticise that that. Hannibal Lecter was still his own person, no matter his designation!

Hannibal's warm and steady hand at the small of his back made the Alpha aware that he was shivering with the effort of keeping his agitation in. The trouble with such situations was, that his Omega got it all wrong. The psychiatrist still did not dare to read their bond so, as always when Will was angry, he became worried and tried to sooth him, thinking that it was his fault.

"I'm sorry Will. I …"

When Hannibal interrupted himself, unable to find reason for his behaviour other than it not feeling right, Will exhaled tiredly. Raking his fingers through his hair, messing it up even more than the wind already had, the Alpha turned around to face his partner. Hannibal met his eyes, calm and composed, but Will could feel the apprehension underneath the collected façade.

Insistently Will reminded him, "It's your decision. It will always be your decision if I touch you or not. It doesn't matter where we are. That's not something you should even have to worry about. That this imbecile of an Alpha has agitated you makes me want to strangle him."

"It is not my agitation I am worried about, Will."

Leaning back against the railing, looking into the clear, blue sky, pulling strength from the joyous surroundings, from Emily and his Omega who stood close because he knew, that proximity helped, Will managed to calm down. Brushing the tips of his fingers over Hannibal's palm and wrist, Will admitted, "I hate it that people look differently at you once they see your mating bite. It is supposed to protect you, not be the cause of you being treated differently."

Finally closing the last distance between them, Hannibal lowered his lips to claim Will's. "I will never worry about these people as much as I am worried about you. You are my first and foremost concern. During my next session with Mr. Tailer I will explain that my designation is not something to be discussed and encourage him to choose another psychiatrist. Would that please you?"

Burying his fingers through Hannibal's silky strands, Will nipped at his jaw before pulling his partner as close as possible, reluctantly admitting, "It would give me a great peace of mind to know that you won't have to spent time in a room alone with that guy. He looks far too interested, for my liking."

Will had coaxed Mr. Tailer's next appointment out of Hannibal's receptionist Phyllis Cummings, by bribing her with a chocolate croissant from the best bakery in Baltimore. Aware that his partner would most likely think himself above petty concerns like his designation causing problems, the Alpha wanted to give him a little incentive to transfer the man to another psychiatrist.

With the promised croissant, two sandwiches and salads from the James Joyce Pub, and a little token in his back pocket, the profiler surprised his partner with an unexpected lunch. Though Hannibal usually preferred food of his own making, he seemed to enjoy their meal together. Once they were finished Will started to set his plan in motion. The two had had very little time to be together for the last one-and-a-half weeks, so it was not hard for the Alpha to let an innocent kiss become passionate.

The doctor however, clearly had second thoughts concerning the subject. "My next appointment will be here in about fifteen minutes Will. I can't allow you to just fuck me in my office and be gone. That would be quite unprofessional."

Caressing Hannibal's bottom lip with the tip of his finger, before slowly trailing down his throat, nibbling on his partners ear because he knew how to ignite Hannibal's passion, Will merely whispered silkily, "Alright, let's have it your way then." And without further hesitation, the Alpha turned his partner towards the ladder that led to his gallery pressing into him from behind.

Protesting weakly, Hannibal felt Will's skilled fingers caressing his already hardening cock through his pants. Regrettably his body only needed very little incentive to follow his Alpha's unspoken demands. His breathless protests were drowned by the moans his partner drew out of him, by opening his pants, and caressing his backside in rhythm with his caresses of Hannibal's cock. The Omega could already feel the slick wetting his pants.

With a barely concealed shout, he reached for the rungs of the ladder, to have something to hold on to, when Will pulled down the light-grey fabric, finally removing the last barrier between his hands and Hannibal's heated skin. Quietly the Alpha reminded his partner, "I don't like knowing you in the same room with an Alpha who looks at you, like you are a prize to be won."

"He's my …" with a harsh breath, laden with anticipation, Hannibal interrupted himself when he heard the zipper of Will's trousers opening. "… my patient. I am supposed to …"

Slowly breaching his partner with the tip of his cock, straining the both of them because he had taken very little time to prepare the Omega, Will whispered, "It's up to you to change that."

"Are you trying to persuade me with sex to abandon a patient I have cared for, for two years now?"

Wrapping his hand firmly around his Omega's cock, holding him in place, Will breathed into his ear, "I would never do that." Before distancing his groin from that of his partner, so that

no more than the tip of his erection would remain logged in his partner's backside. Slowly, methodically Will started to stroke himself, making sure that he was only moving minuscule, never going deeper.

Soon enough, he had Hannibal snarling at him, demanding from him to fuck him since he was trapped by Will's hand on his erection, but the Alpha only shushed him. "Remember, my love. You were the one who decided that I couldn't fuck you in your office."

Growling angrily, Hannibal asked, "That what are you doing?"

Tightening his grip, making his partner arch into the touch, Will took his time. With lazy movements he caressed his own cock, sometimes squeezing Hannibal's at the same tempo, but mostly just making sure to hold his Omega at a distance. His breath barely hitched when he reached a shallow orgasm and spilled into his Omega.

Dizzy for a moment by his Alpha's bliss that was transmitted though their bond, Hannibal could barely react when Will pulled back, replacing his cock with something smaller but far more unyielding.

After Will's hand had left his cock, gently stroking his bottom, distributing the fluids that had collected there the Alpha answered. "Staking a claim." Licking away the excess of wetness, Will made sure that Hannibal was once again safely tucked away in his boxers, gently caressing his partner's neck.

Once he got himself under control again, Hannibal turned around, glaring at his Alpha. He was well aware that his patient would arrive within the next few minutes, and he was practically reeking of his Alpha. A part of him was quite pleased with this situation, but his mind raged at the manipulation. "We will discuss this tonight."

Nonchalantly Will shrugged. "Of course we will. In your home, between the two of us. And no matter what comes of it, it will not be his concern!"

When Will left the office two minutes later, he found Mr. Tailer already sitting in the waiting room. Casually closing his zipper, he smiled predatorily at the man, before leaving for the academy.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Mirror Image

Contrary to Hannibal's believes that Mr. Tailer would bring up his designation, the man merely smiled at him before contemplating calmly, "I take it that your Alpha does not particularly enjoy seeing me as your patient. Should I be looking for another psychiatrist?"

Doing his best to keep his annoyance under control, Hannibal merely straightened his cuffs when inviting his patient in, informing him casually, "My Alpha has no authority over who I keep as a patient. So you don't have to worry."

Claiming his seat he offered a drink before asking, "What would you like to discuss today?"

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

During dinner that evening Hannibal did his very best not fidget in his seat. The toy had sent sparks of pleasure thorough his body the entire day, and though he had not liked the watchful eyes of the Alpha in his office, the desiring look of his partner right now only fanned the flames that had been flickering through him all afternoon. True, he had been terribly annoyed at Will at the beginning. He did not particularly cherish being played. But despite all that annoyance, his biology had loved the claim his Alpha had staked on him and he had not once thought about helping himself or taking out the plug.

When dinner was finished and they had relocated to the living room with some soothing music, Will claimed an armchair facing Hannibal, obviously assuming that his partner wanted to address what had happened today.

When the doctor looked at him, partially irritated but mostly patiently waiting, Will started the conversation with an assumption, "You didn't sign this Alpha off to another psychiatrist, did you?"

Reining in his desires, Hannibal glared at him. "You have no right to ask me to give up a patient."

"I didn't." Will answered, smiling mischievously. "Not once during our encounter preceding Mr. Tailer's appointment, did I ask you to give him up as your patient."

"Your actions implied it!" the doctor insisted, but sighed and sank back against the sofa, shifting against the toy that kept him distracted. True Will's actions today had been very unprofessional. But his Alpha had not forced him. Hannibal knew that he could have ended their encounter, even turn it around at any given moment. He had decided to let Will see his claim through and not contradict him.

Relaxing back into the chair, spreading his legs, putting his hands on his own knees, Will agreed, "They did, but since you didn't follow my request, none of us is the wiser for it."

Slowly trailing his hands over his thighs until they reached his pelvis, Will languidly caressed his growing cock though his trousers, pinning down his Omega with a heated look. Silkily he stated, “You have been on edge all day, haven’t you? Show me, Hannibal. Show me what you have let me do to you.”

Reluctant, because he knew that Will was right and Hannibal was quite reluctant to admit to a weakness, the Omega exhaled shaking, giving in to the latest demand. Mirroring his Alpha’s position, he followed Will’s hushed order, “Open your shirt.”

Slowly he loosened his tie and parting the soft cloth, revealing his chest, he let the ecstasy of obedience wash over him, closing his eyes with a soft groan.

After a few moments Will demanded, “Hannibal, look at me.”

The Omega fought to open his eyes, watching his Alpha who was slowly opening his trousers. Mirroring the actions, he felt his breath hitch when his hand closed around his erection the same moment Will’s did with his own. Hannibal arched into his own touch at his Alpha’s soft praise. “You look so beautiful like this. And you are so very good. Do you want us to come? Together?”

Licking his dry lips the Omega merely nodded, unable to fight the haze of lust his obedience, the toy and his movements were caused. Slowly he copied his Alpha’s movements, watched Will stroking his own shaft, picking up the small trail of semen that had welled up, using it to ease his movements. When the young man put his thumb to his lips, licking away the drop so that it would not soil his trousers, Hannibal heard himself whining quietly.

That was not what he had desired all afternoon. He wanted to be the one to touch this shaft. To be the one who brought his Alpha pleasure, not by providing a spectacle, but by touching him. His own hand had stroked his own erection relentlessly and he could already feel the much needed relieve well up inside of him. He groaned again, unsure of what to do next, to finish himself off, to touch Will, to …

“So good,” whispered his Alpha. “I didn’t think that you would wear it all day, but you look so amazing with the plug deep inside of you.”

And all of a sudden, Hannibal knew what he wanted. What he had wanted ever since Will had spilled inside of him, neither granting him release nor the satisfaction of being claimed. The doctor's low growl made Will look up from his groin and Hannibal could see an amused spark in the empath’s eyes.

In a hushed voice he tempted the Omega, “Is this arrangement not to your liking? I enjoy it very much, I have to tell you that.” As if to prove his words, Will gripped his own cock tighter, speeding up his movements, relaxing against the armchair closing his eyes for a heartbeat.

Hannibal was upon him in an instant, wrapping his strong fingers around his Alpha’s wrist, keeping him from finding completion. When the young man looked up at him lazily, he snarled, “This is *not* what I want!”

The Alpha however didn’t seem to take him serious, because he only chuckled, using his free hand to reach between Hannibal’s legs, nudging the plug, making his Omega weak in the knees. At the same time he pulled Hannibal closer by the Omega's hand on his wrist, making the other man lose his footing and landing on top of him. Will apparently saw no fault in this position. He even wrapped his hand around both of their cocks, giving them a tantalizing stroke.

Too far gone to protest, Hannibal arched into a contact he had direly missed all day. That was not what he had wanted, but he couldn’t bring himself to pull back again, not when he finally felt Will’s hand on his skin.

But the Alpha was more than aware of what his partner needed. Slowly coaxing his Omega to let go of his hand, he pulled Hannibal even closer, teasingly kissing his chest. When he was able to get a grip on the but-plug he slowly gave it a twist, before pulling it from the doctor’s body. He felt a gush of warm liquid staining his trousers, but Will couldn’t care less at the moment. Nudging a shivering Hannibal up, so that he could lose those irritating slacks, he pulled him into his lap, scooting lower in the chair to give his partner some room.

Without a prompt the Omega reached for his Alpha’s cock, accepting it into his body without the slightest preparation. He had been on edge all day and all he had wanted was his partner to fill him, to make good on the unspoken promise he had given at lunchtime.

Will could barely still Hannibal long enough for his body to adjust to the intrusion. After a mere minute he let go and instantly the Omega started to move. What followed was a demanding rhythm of moving and swaying, of having his cock sinking into the burning heat of his partner and squeezed teasingly over and over again. But despite the teasing Will did his best to relax and let go, not directing Hannibal’s movements simply letting his Omega take whatever he needed.

When Hannibal finally reached for his cock again, Will battered his hand way, providing the friction the Omega needed to reach his peak himself. When Hannibal spilled, both over Will’s hand and his light-blue dress shirt, the Alpha involuntary tightened his grip when his own peak washed over him. Panting hard, Hannibal shivered for a moment, looking down at Will as if looking for something. Out of breath he demanded, “You won’t repeat that. It’s unprofessional and rude.”

“Agreed.” Will admitted, gently caressing Hannibal’s thighs. “Still, you can’t expect me to like it when I know that you sit through an appointment with an Alpha who looks at you like you are something to eat.”

Relieved after his partner’s concession, Hannibal sank down, burying his face in his Alpha’s neck. “I don’t expect you to like it. But I do expect just to trust me that I can handle myself.”

And with that Mr. Tailer’s appointments continued. Will still visited Hannibal for lunch the same day, but other than kissing Hannibal’s neck leaving his scent prominent on his Omega, the Alpha refrained from doing anything more invasive.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Two weeks later, Will was nearly run over, by an agitated Jack Crawford, who sprinted though the corridors of the FBI-headquarters. When asking what was wrong while jogging alongside the other Alpha, Jack informed him, that a new victim of their latest killer had been found. Revealing himself ready to depart, Will froze mid-step when his superior officer told him that he would sit this one out, before leaving by police car. What the hell …?

Though Will Graham had never seen the appeal of sharing his life on social media platforms, he enjoyed the insight they offered whenever a new occurrence that had Baltimore in an uproar.

Fifteen minutes after Jack Crawford's departure Will knew where the latest crime-scene was and was on his way. It was not easy for him to work his way through the crowd of people that surrounded the closed off area of the local Gwynns Falls Park. But once he had reached the police line, he flashed his badge to was allowed to pass.

Still, before he could get a glimpse of their victim, Brian Zeller was in his way, putting down his camera, blocking Will's view. "You really should leave. Jack told us that you wouldn't consult on this one. Just go, Will."

The profiler looked at his colleague uncomprehending and pushed past him. Instantly Beverly was there to block his way and a moment later Jack. Both tried to hold him back, Jack even put his hand on Will's chest, even though he knew, that the empath did not like physical contact. All of a sudden, all the profiler could think about was the victim. It had to be someone he knew, otherwise his colleagues would not try to hold him back so insistently.

Will could think of only one target who would merit this reaction. But it could not be Hannibal. He had just talked to his partner mere hours ago.

"Let me … let me though!" Will demanded agitated, fighting past the two Alphas, facing the crime-scene but what he saw was more than his mind could handle.

He froze, took in a scene his brain refused to make sense of. After blinking he saw the familiar Ravenstag emerging from the nearby treeline. Lazily the majestic animal approached the victim, circled it before gazing at the empath whose fragile mind had conjured it.

For a mere heartbeat Will hesitated, taking in the picture before he flinched back so forcefully that he nearly stumbled over his own feet. Only Beverly and Jacks' fast reflexes kept him upright when he twisted around and parted from his lunch. All he could think about when cramps shook him was 'Someone knows' because this was a crime-scene of the Chesapeake Ripper and the victim was Will Graham.

After dry-heaving for several minutes, he pulled forth his phone and typed with shaking fingers:

[>I need you. Gwynns Falls Park.<]

before sinking boneless against a nearby tree.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Chesapeake Ripper

A weave of utter despair had washed over Hannibal so strongly, that he had broken the pen he had taken notes with during his appointment. Right away the psychiatrist had asked his patient to leave, promising not to charge for the session. He was already speeding through town when he realized that he did not know where to go.

All he knew was that his Alpha was out of his mind with fear. A moment later he received Will's message. Pushing down the gas, not caring about speed limits, the doctor reached the park in record time and used his elbows to make his way thought the crowd as fast as possible.

Once reaching to police tape, he demanded Jack Crawford and within moments his friend was picking him up. On their way to the crime scene Jack revealed his worries of Will going into shock in the middle of a crime-scene. Absent minded Hannibal registered that the agent had not thought his profiler's presence to be a good idea on this crime scene. But he tuned out the words when he saw his partner, sitting between the roots of a tree, staring into space. Someone had put a blanket over his shoulders. Yet the empath had not even registered the gesture, letting the fabric slip down unappreciated.

Ignoring the stains the grass would leave on his trousers, Hannibal sank to his knees in front of his partner, gently touching his ice-cold face. The gesture seemed to pull Will from his shock, because after a few blinks he looked into Hannibal's eyes and whispered, "Someone knows, Hannibal. This victim was killed by the Chesapeake Ripper and it is me."

Taking his partner's face into his hands, forcing the younger man to make eye-contact the psychiatrist reminded him, "This is not you, Will. Because you are here, safe and sound. And whatever this is, we will deal with it."

The empath needed a few moments before he could nod and put his arms around Hannibal in a vice grip. Using the leverage, the psychiatrist pulled Will to his feet and once again wrapped the blanket around the shivering body. He had seen Will this distressed before, when the encephalitis had started to cloud the empath's mind. He had felt slight regret about pushing the profiler then, now, this was anguish: To see his partner but barely being able to help.

Still, what Will needed right now was a level-headed decision, so the psychiatrist asked suggestively, "Do you want me to drive you home, or do you want to take another look at the crime-scene so that we can catch this killer?"

As expected Will straightened and nodded. "I want to take another look. We have to find him, and see that he is brought to justice."

Smiling proudly at his partner, Hannibal was sure that his and Will's and Jack Crawford's belief of justice would differ, but first they had to find this killer. Once they had him they could decide on a suitable sentence.

Approaching the crime-scene, Hannibal marvelled at the presentation of the victim. He could clearly see the resemblance, but also the difference between Will and the victim. The young man, who was neatly stabbed by four pairs of antlers, that held him up like an offering to the god's, was slightly younger than Will Graham. His hair had been coloured to mirror Will's soft brown colour. And he was a few centimetres taller than Will, allowing the antlers to hold him up on his thighs and shoulders, his belly remained unmarred. That made the incision on the white skin where the organs had been removed all the more prominent.

The resemblance was clearly there and Hannibal could see why it had unsettled his partner. But it was not overly so. Still this could mean that someone was taunting Will with his inability to catch the Chesapeake Ripper. How little did this fool know.

Hannibal had a very good idea about the organs that were missing, knowing what he would have taken. All in all he would have admired the skill of the killer, had the appearance of the victim agreed with him.

Will demanded, "Don't let go of me." Before approaching the crime-scene a second time. The profiler knew what he had to do, but he would never be able to see this killing, without his partner by his side to ground him.

Putting his hand at the small of his partner's back, Hannibal promised, "Never."

Trusting his anchor, Will forced himself to calm his breath and closed his eyes.

When Will opened his eyes to the mind of the killer he found the Ravenstag at his side, gently nudging him from behind. He realized that the creature had represented Hannibal all along, feeling his distress though their bond, approaching him on a subconscious level to help. The fear was still there, not for himself, because despite being the victim in this scenario, Will was not scared of dying.

True he had a happy live now, with a partner who not only needed but also supported him, but if he lost it, he would just cease to exist. After the fear of losing his mind, death had lost its horrors to Will long ago. But to see Hannibal in danger because someone was copying his methods was unacceptable. So Will sank into the twisted mind of this killer, watching the murder unfold.

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"I need to go to Wolfs Trap." Will decided quietly when they left Gwynns Fall Park.

Nodding in confirmation, Hannibal felt a strange sort of content every time Will referred to his mansion as 'home' and his own barn slash house as 'Wolfs Trap'. Will had found homes for most of his dogs, and installed a security door with electronic lock's that would allow the two remaining dogs to leave and enter as long as they wore their collars, so they were not be confined to the house when he wasn't there. A neighbour of Will was nice enough to feed

them, whenever the profiler was not around. They were paying her handsomely for this little task and since she lived on minimum pension she was truly grateful for the support and often staid on Will's patio so that the dogs would not be alone.

"Do you want to share your thoughts?" Hannibal asked half an hour into the drive.

Smiling tiredly Will turned to look at his psychiatrist. "You know, if you would open yourself to our bond you wouldn't have to ask this question. Especially not since you don't worry about what I am thinking but how I am feeling right now."

Hannibal gripped the steering wheel tighter for a moment, but refrained on commenting.

Sighing tiredly, Will looked out of the window again. "I'm worried. I'm just worried that you might be in danger and would feel better if we stayed away from our accustomed circles for a few days."

"We both have work to attend to." Hannibal objected, slightly worried that Will really had the intention of isolating them in Wolfs Trap.

"I know" the Alpha whispered before looking out of the window again. "Just for tonight, though."

Reaching over to his Omega, gently caressing his face, Hannibal reached for the clammy fingers and kissed them tenderly. "As you wish, my dear."

When they arrived the dogs greeted them overjoyed, not leaving their sides when Hannibal entered the – well not good but at least acceptably equipped kitchen – after having prompted Will to take a hot shower to warm up. It would be a simple meal but the best he could provide under the circumstances. Since Hannibal was not a great friend of dogs in the kitchen, he ordered them to sit at the threshold to the living room, praising and rewarding them regularly as long as they stayed put.

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After dinner they sat on the porch, huddled up in blankets with a hot grog, Hannibal had magically conjured from the sparse content of Will's kitchen, and watched the sun setting. Feeling the strong arms of his partner surrounding him, Will finally was able to think past the haze of the fear and the resentment the crime-scene has brought to his mind.

Hannibal had been there in record time, admitting later that he had already been in the car when receiving Will's text message. Still the Omega had not known what had been wrong, having needed all of his strength to hold on to his composure to reach his Alpha without causing an accident.

Will was well aware that Hannibal never reacted to shifts in their bond, with the exception of Will flooding it with strong feelings like love, hate, joy, anger or in this case mind numbing fear. The small nuances evaded Hannibal and that was quite atypical for someone who spent so much time judging human behaviour. Trying to solve that puzzle of his partner's dismissive reaction in the car, Will asked after a while, "Why do you never pull, Hannibal? You react to every emotion I push into our bond, on purpose or not, but you never reach for my feelings. Do you never want to know?"

At that question Hannibal flinched marginally, but thankfully Will refrained to react. Instead he felt the calm and care Will pushed towards him, trying to sooth the doctor. Still, Hannibal couldn't bring himself to go deeper than that. To invade his Alpha's mind, instead of simply accepting what Will purposefully wanted him to know. "I don't … I don't want to invade the privacy of your mind. The last time I tried something like that I caused you harm."

Sighing slightly, because the empathic Alpha was well aware of Hannibal's feelings, Will closed his eyes, careful to reign in the feeling of disappointment. He pulled Hannibal's hand to his lips and lovingly kissed his Omega's palm. "You know I would never expect anything from you that makes you uncomfortable, Hannibal."

Freeing himself from the blanket, rising from the porch, Will turned around one last time, kissing his Omega's forehead, whispering, "But stop lying to me. I don't like it." Before whistling for his dogs, taking them for a walk."

Pulling the blanket around himself, Hannibal tried his best to keep the lingering scent of his Alpha close. He had tried to be honest and the explanation surely had held a grain of truth. But the doctor was aware of how much he had been omitting with the answer. The problem was … he was not ready to be honest. Not even with himself.

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A Nightmare

Chapter Summary

Before you read this please gather either a soft blanket, a cup of hot chocolate or a very, fluffy teddy-bear.
My recommendation would be all of the above. Now find a nice and sunny place, because this is going to be dark!

Chapter Notes

Honestly, I never wrote a warning before, but please heed the updated tags and if you think this is going to be too hard for you, skip the italic part. I promise it will still make sense. You already have a very good idea what has happened to Hannibal in his youth, but now I will spell it out and it will be brutal and bloody and violent.

When he looked at Mischa, who was offering a flower-crown, Hannibal was well aware that this was not right. He was not a teenage boy any longer. He was … older … autonomous … with different goals in his life but the amusement of his baby-sister. But after blinking a few times, looking into her laughing eyes, the knowledge faded away and he woke to the reality of his dream.

It was the summer after his seventeenth birthday. He had presented the year before, going through his first heat and leaving his parents with the certainty that their eldest son would not carry on the name of their family. Still, they had deemed him valuable and had told him so countless times. He was still a member of the esteemed Lecter Family. Every Alpha in the country would be honoured to have him as his mate.

He had gone through his first heat alone, with medication to dampen the effects and toys to relieve his accumulated sexual energy. Two months after his heat Mischa had snooped through his drawers and had found one of the dildos. Hannibal had been too embarrassed to explain, instead took it and distracted her with a piece of music he had composed just for her.

Complimenting his little sister on the carefully chosen colours, he carefully set the crown right after her putting it on his head: Now watched Mischa dancing over the meadow, chasing a butterfly. Relaxing in the wild grass, Hannibal tried to soak up the sun and the peace of his surroundings. He knew he would need it later today.

Tonight an Alpha from a neighbouring family would attend their family dinner. A suitable partner, he had been told. Hannibal had seen him just once, but he already knew that he didn't like him. There was something in the eyes of that man that sent shivers down his spine.

The evening turned out to be even worse than anticipated. After dinner, the grown-ups retreated to the salon. Hannibal was allowed to join them, but once the Alpha had chosen a chair, he monitored for Hannibal to kneel by his side. 'In preparation for the place he would occupy in the his household.'

Having been taught self-respect, Hannibal had of course refused, quite vocally in fact. That earned him a slap from the older man, and being sent to his room by his father who had looked at him with disapproval for his rude words. He had cried that night, scared of the life he was about to face when mated with such a vicious man. Mischa had crawled into his bed around midnight, claiming that she had had a nightmare, but both knew, that his heart-breaking sobs had woken her.

After this incident, the Alpha had kept his distance. Apparently his parents hadn't approved of the way their precious son had been treated.

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Scourging heat was burning though his veins. Their families' doctor had supplied him with the necessary drugs, but while thinking last year's heat to be overwhelming and unbearable, this one was ten times worse. He whimpered constantly because no amount of friction or stimulation could ease the devastating need that dominated his every sentient thought.

He had just switched toys when he heard gunfire and screams from downstairs. He was aware that his family was having dinner at the moment. The shooting pushed the heat temporarily from his mind.

Shivering he put on light trousers and half stumbled half crawled to the ground-level of their spacious house. The scene that greeted him in the living room nearly made him throw up, had his stomach not been blessedly empty. His parents both sat in their accustomed chairs, looking over the dinner-table from both sides. At least they would have looked at it, had they still had eyes in their sockets. They might even have talked, had their throats not been cut, marring both their clothes and the pristine, white table-cloth with a sickening amount of blood.

The Alpha who had been presented as his bond mate sat on Mischa's chair, holding the little one by her hair, evoking tears with every harsh pull. Madly he snickered, "Look who has deigned to join our little dinner party. Hannibal my sweet.. I thought you were … indisposed." Inhaling deeply he let his eyes wander over the teenager's body. "It seems that your mother was indeed honest with us, who knew. Well, we would have killed her anyway."

When he heard his sister cry out once again, Hannibal stumbled to the table, barely keeping himself upright on the edge, glaring at the Alpha who sat at the other side. "What … what do you want?"

Gesturing bored, the man said, "Well, you of course. I think I have made at least that clear enough."

"Let her … let her go and you can have me." Hannibal choked.

Mischa was important. Mischa was the only thing that was still important. Hannibal had suffered this heat for three days now. He barely had the capacity to hold himself upright. Still he was well aware of the other men who stood in the corners of the dining room. Had it been only him, he would have tried to kill the bastard who had taken his parents' lives and threatened his sister. Even though he could barely stand right now without holding on to the closest surface.

Triumphantly, the Alpha growled at him when pushing Mischa towards one of his two henchman. Leaning back in his chair, obscenely spreading his legs he ordered, "Crawl."

And all Hannibal could do was to swallow his pride and to obey, because if he didn't, his sister would suffer for it.

The teenager had not counted on the strength of the pheromones an Alpha was giving off when being close to an Omega in heat. Even before he had closed the last distance, the older man had pulled out his cock, swaying it tantalizingly before Hannibal's eyes.

Despite having only theoretical knowledge about sex, the young man still felt mesmerized by the Alpha's cock and couldn't help but whimper, when the older man pulled it away, as soon as he was within reach.

"Beg for it!" he demanded, and Hannibal begged. Every sane thought was clouded by desire. He whimpered and pleaded to finally be allowed the much needed contact. And when the man finally buried into him, he was keening from pain as well as from desire.

It was too much, he wanted, no, needed this, but the restless and brutal pounding did nothing to satisfy his burning body. When the Alpha spilled inside of him, it granted Hannibal a moment of clarity, only to see the two thugs cutting his sisters throat.

He shouted, tried to twist in the strong arms of the man who had bent him over the table, holding him down by brutally restraining his hands over his head, forcing him to look at him or at one of his dead parent when turning his head to the side.

Devastated when he heard his baby-sister's body falling to the floor, Hannibal lost the last of his defiance and with the next orgasm, he felt the Alpha invading his mind, like he was invading his body, revealing every last of the teenagers secrets, while pulling him into the darkest corners of his own mind.

Hannibal had been at the end of his strength after that and barely realized when the man lifted him into his arms to return him to bed.

The Alpha chained him to the bedpost, before kissing him in a mocking-tender gesture, promising to see to Hannibal's dinner.

Two more days his heat lasted, during which his world was made of brutal fucking, cold showers and meals he was forced to eat when kneeling at his Alpha's feet as if he was a dog.

This entire time, the Alpha tormented him with pictures of the death of his parents, the murder of his sister and when he revealed where the meat had come from, Hannibal had thrown up violently. He had never imagined so much darkness to live in the mind of one single person and when his heat broke and he woke around four in the morning three days after the death of his family, he picked the lock of his chains and sneaked out of the bed to retrieve his pocket knife.

Without the slightest remorse, he first slit his Alpha's throat before cutting off his cock and balls. The thugs who had claimed two of the mansion's guest rooms shared their leader's fate. Sneaking up on them Hannibal cut their throats and left them bleeding to death. Then he called the police.

Numbly he had sat thought the trial, obediently following every advice his family's lawyer gave, confirming a story where the three men had repeatedly raped him and he had merely defended himself. The knife had been explained by him fearing for his life, despite 'His Alpha' being present.

It was a hair-raising story, but since every last member of the jury could see the desolation in the teenager's eyes, they accepted it, judging him 'not guilty' of manslaughter.

Hannibal accepted the custody of his father's brother, living under his uncle's roof for about half a year until he would reach maturity. He suffered through nightmares and panic attacks whenever the memories overwhelmed him.

The day he turned eighteen, he had liquidated his family's savings and left the country. But fleeing his hometown, leaving everything behind had not brought relieve. His memories of his failure of protecting his loved ones had followed him every step of the way. Feeling nothing had been better than feeling so much pain ever again.

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"Love?"

A gentle prompting.

"Hannibal!"

An urgent request.

"You are having a nightmare. Wake up!"

An order, that was finally able to lift the horrors of the dream.

Choking Hannibal cried out, too caught up in the memories and the darkness that had surrounded him. Curling into a ball he tried to protect himself, from the shadows his first Alpha had left in his mind, tainting him without a chance of liberation.

Clearly worried, Will tried to pull him closer, to sooth him with calm words. "What is it? Hannibal, it's alright, you are safe. I would never let anybody hurt you, you know that!" Raising his head, Will peaked at his nightstand, nudging his Omega while whispering, "Look up, my love. I even took out my weapon. You have to calm down. Breathe, Hannibal. Please, just breathe with me."

Forcing himself to take even breaths, hoping to prompt his Omega to mirror his actions, Will managed to appease the agitated man, nearly snarling in fury, when he heard his partner whisper. "It was his mind, the Alpha's mind was a constant source of darkness, he tainted everything, tainted me. Everything in him tried to subdue me, I was not strong enough. Never strong enough to stand up to him! Not strong enough to save them." before sobbing wretchedly.

In that moment Will wanted to take his weapon, leave this house and dig up that bastard who had done this to his Omega to tear him apart. But this monster was dead and Will had to deal with the fallout.

Gently turning his partner, prompting him to look at him, seeing all the fear Hannibal usually kept hidden so very good, Will fought for serenity. He wouldn't do Hannibal any good if he was unsettled as well. Gently caressing his Omega's face, opening their connection, he whispered, "I would never try to subdue you. You know that, Hannibal. Take a look into my mind, just one little peak and you will know that I would never, ever hurt you."

Shivering all over Hannibal looked at Will, trying to come to a decision. If Will was telling the truth, at least the version of the truth he believed in, he would see less darkness in his Alpha's mind than in the man he had killed as a teenager.

But what if every Alpha's mind was the same? If the darkness was part of their designation. What if they drew their strength from? Hannibal didn't think he could live being bonded to a mind that mirrored that of his first Alpha.

He had never invaded Will's mind, because who knew better than him how vast the difference was between the things you said and did and the ones you thought. But still, this was Will, his Alpha. Hannibal could not live with this uncertainty for the rest of his life. If there was darkness, he would find a way to shield himself from it, shield himself from the only person he had ever trusted in all of his adult life. He opened his mind and started to pull.

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Will's Mind

First there was fear, then there was darkness, blackness in such overwhelming amounts that Hannibal nearly pulled back at first. He had to calm himself. To hold on to his determination to work though the overwhelming emotions before he could continue his journey into the mind of his Alpha.

At the first glance Will seemed drown in fear and eternal night. Unexpectedly, a Ravenstag, a majestic beast emerged from the depth of his partner's mind and when he looked into the eyes of the fantastic creature, he saw mirror images of himself. Grateful for having something familiar to hold on to Hannibal placed a hand on the soft feathers of its back, and allowed it to guide him into the depth of Will's mind.

Slowly, step by step Hannibal could make out more of his surroundings. He saw Will in countless reflections. Poised over a dead body, the gun in his hand still smoking, eyes boring into Hannibal, emotionless and cold.

Cutting the throat of a screaming woman, silencing her before leaning down to place one last kiss on her dying lips. When the Will looked up, the psychiatrist could see madness in his eyes.

The Omega spotted his partner standing behind a young man, closing his hands around his throat, slowly squeezing the life out of him, insane triumph in his gaze.

Hunger, dread, satisfaction, madness, a twisted sense of accomplishment, even love. All those emotions existed next to each other, fighting for dominance, so close to the surface of Will’s mind that the psychiatrist pondered for a few moments if his partner was not mad already. All the conflicting emotions caused Hannibal a splitting headache.

But worst of all, was the all-encompassing fear, stronger than every other emotion and somehow the doctor thought this feeling to be the only true one. The only one that really belonged to Will Graham and not the twisted copies he glanced at, at every turn.

He wanted to go, to turn around and leave, but all of a sudden he could hear Will's warm words whispering in his mind. "Just a little further. Just a few more steps, my love. Please, don’t be afraid."

Unable to rid himself completely from the overwhelming anxiety, Hannibal felt the urge to pull back, to not see what else was in his partner's mind. The darkness was prominent. Just like with the first Alpha who had claimed Hannibal and despite his experience and the violence he had committed in his life, he felt no more ready to deal with this, than he had felt some twenty years ago.

As if aware of his Omega's unease, Will was suddenly pushing again. Instead of feeling the emotions through their bond, slowly seeping into his mind, Hannibal was unexpectedly encompassed by light that battled the darkness away. But it was no source of illumination

instead it was an overwhelming feeling of love and care, of trust and affection and gradually the doctor felt better, settled once again and ready to continue his exploration.

The Ravenstag had waited for him, patiently remained at his side. Deeper they ventured still and the murder-scenes changed. At first Hannibal couldn't pinpoint the difference but slowly he realized that the killings became more sophisticated, more 'designed' and the suffocating fear lessened little by little.

Close to the core – though the Omega had no idea how he knew that – he recognized the killings as his own. The presentation of the victims were flawless, every one of them presented as if under a spotlight.

A dark creature, with charcoal grey skin and huge antlers paced between the scenes. Rearranging one flower here and stripping another piece of skin there. Correcting whatever fault it was seeing. It was frightening and exhilarating at the same time, to finally realize how Will saw the Chesapeake Ripper: as Wendigo, a mythical creature of old, nearly twice as tall as a normal human being. His skin black as polished as marble, black eyes not speak of violence or cruelty but of superiority. A dark angel amongst humans.

Hannibal realized that there had been fear, even for him but not any longer. Despite Will's mind being dominated by it, the empath was no longer afraid of the Chesapeake Ripper.

When the Wendigo was finished with his inspection he approached Hannibal. With every step he changed, morphed into an animal that walked on four legs instead of two and in the blink of an eye he had changed into the Ravenstag, merging with the beast that had guided Hannibal ever since entering Will's mind.

The stag itself now left Hannibal's side, prancing around him before looking into the doctor's eyes, changing as well, morphing into a humanoid figure and took the last step forward to become a part of Hannibal himself.

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It was as if opening his eyes for real for the very first time. It might have taken Hannibal seconds, hours or even years to take in everything that was his Alpha, but finally he was able to understand. Turning back, looking at the gruesome reflections that had greeted him upon his arrival, he realized that they were echoes of past killers Will had invited into his mind by profiling them. The blackness that surrounded them was not really darkness and malicious intent but the simple absence of light, since Will didn't judge them important enough to spare them a conscious thought any longer.

It was different with the killings of the Chesapeake Ripper. They were important to the empath, always present. Reminding him of the flawless design his partner was able to create. There was no anxiety, only fascination. And though Hannibal knew that Will did not approve of him killing someone simply for being rude, the empath clearly was able to see the superior intent that guided his actions.

So much love and understanding nearly brought tears to Hannibal's eyes, despite him being currently wrapped up in his Alpha's mind without a real body. How could he have ever suspected that there was only darkness? All of a sudden he could feel the gentle touch of his partner, turning around he gasped.

Will's self-image was quite distorted, smaller, weaker, so much less than the imposing figure Hannibal had gotten to know.

Unable to allow such an incorrect perception, the Omega shook his head, "No, no, that's not right. You can't … that's not who you are, Will." And for the first time Hannibal started to push, to forcefully push thoughts and emotions into their connection, pictures of strength, determination, dominance, valued aspects of every Alpha, valued aspects of Will Graham.

And slowly, with every passing moment Will changed right before his eyes. The Alpha was tentatively touching his own face before reaching for Hannibal. "I have a hard time believing that this is how the world sees me." He whispered with a gentle smile.

"This is how I see you. What else is important?" the Omega assured him.

After an affectionate kiss, Will reached for his hand. "You have seen the worst, now let me show you the best."

Together they started the journey through Will's mind. There was so much sadness, and so much fear. Isolation because no one was able to understand and very few happy moments, showing Omegas in Will's past that made Hannibal's gut flare up in jealousy.

But the empath only laughed and continued to guide Hannibal through his memories. He showed him the first time he had met Jack Crawford. The first day at the academy after having been rejected as a field agent.

His returning to the field, and the triumph when catching a killer in the very last moment before he could claim another victim. There was content and satisfaction but very little happiness or joy in Will’s past.

That changed when they left the random memories behind, when they reached the core of Will's being, the centre his whole mind revolved around. It was no sharp, blinding light as the Omega would have suspected with a human as brilliant as his Alpha.

No, there was only one single flame, a constant source of soft and warm light that illuminated a core that was pure joy, pure adoration and pride. There was nothing bad here. All the good in Will's life, the source of constant happiness was right before Hannibal's eyes and in that moment the Omega realized that he was looking at a reflection of himself. So much taller than in real life, beautiful and flawless and everything the Alpha beside him had ever wanted.

He was here, standing on the core of steel that was his Alpha. That enabled Will to glance into the darkest minds and come out unharmed, because now there was a constant source of light in his heart. Someone who lend a helping hand to pull him back from the void.

Hannibal was the flame that lit Will's way and the Alpha beside him would do everything to keep him safe. Simply because Will was convinced, if he lost Hannibal, he lost himself. An Omega needed an Alpha to function, but an empath needed an anchor to ground him and finally the doctor understand the full extent of his value for his partner.

Will would never subdue him, never belittle him because in his mind he was the most precious being in Will's entire universe. Hannibal felt ashamed of ever thinking that his Alpha could have any negative intentions towards him. In the empath's mind he was precious enough to be locked away to ensure his safety. Yet at the same time he was aware, that he could not do this to Hannibal because no matter how much he needed his Omega, the doctor's happiness was still more important to him, than his own peace of mind.

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"In my heart there is no darkness, my love." Will whispered when Hannibal finally opened his eyes again, taking in the surroundings of Will's house. "Only the absence of light concerning things that are not important any longer. That should not frighten you. Everybody else maybe, but never you Hannibal. Because I would rather kill myself then allow any harm to come to you."

Wrapping his arms around his Alpha, overwhelmed by the adoration and care, Hannibal breathed out relieved, "I know, Will." Burying his face in the crook of his partner's neck, the Omega breathed wetly against his partner's skin. "Finally, I understand." History would not repeat itself for Hannibal. Not as long as he had Will by his side.

Wrapping his arms around his Omega, allowing his own calm and tranquillity their contact had brought to Will to seep through their bond, the Alpha rejoiced in the feeling of Hannibal not holding back any longer. When he pushed Hannibal started to pull, finally giving in to his instincts, so it took him less than a minute, to nudge his Omega over the threshold, slowly letting him sink into a peaceful oblivion.

From this day on, Will would not be forced to watch his partner thrash around while nightmares were overwhelming his mind.

Finally Hannibal trusted him enough to open up to him, and despite the danger of the situation, Will couldn't help but smile when finally falling asleep.

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As it turned out that the killer was just another stupid, mindless criminal, not worthy of either Will’s or the FBI’s ongoing attention. He did make a lovely centrepiece on a woodland table though. Perfectly spread over a fallen tree-log, decorated beautifully, with vines that held him apart. The incisions where the organs had been removed, were pure art and precise to a fault.

Nobody knew that this victim was also the killer they had been looking for. Nobody but an Alpha profiler and an Omega serial killer who had been unknowingly taunted. In the end it was just another, flawless design.

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Something Old

Mr. Sebastian Willcox and family
would like to invite you
to our annual boat-trip.

Please prepare yourself for departure
on the 27th of July, 900 a.m. at your local airport.

All amenities will be provided.

Will couldn't help but smile when he opened the expensive envelop he had found beside his breakfast-plate. He had seen neither Sebastian nor Leila for the last ten years so it would be nice to catch up with them. Attached to the richly embroidered invitation were papers with all information necessary for the journey. Even plane tickets had been provided. Impressed with Sebastian's – or his secretaries – impeccable organisation ,Will studied the two tickets and discovered them to be first class. Well, truth to be told, he would not have expected anything less form Sebastian Willcox Junior.

Looking at his Omega who had watched him with interest, Will asserted, "I need to go shopping. I need at least two new suits and maybe a tux. And we have to be swift about it, since we only have three weeks before departure."

Raising his eyebrows inquiring but refraining from offering a comment since Will rarely made decisions for the both of them without asking Hannibal's opinion in the first place, the psychiatrist decided. "I will call my tailor and see if he can make an appointment for you on short notice."

Hannibal had tried for months to persuade Will to extend his wardrobe. Yet until now his Alpha had firmly declined, insistent that his wardrobe was suitable for his own needs. The psychiatrist wondered what kind of invitation his partner had received. But before he could inquire, an off handed comment from his partner interrupted his thoughts.

"I thought you have killed your last tailor?" Will was barely looking up from the sheet of paper he was studying.

The casualty in which the profiler spoke about murder amused Hannibal to no end. He couldn't supress a chuckle. "I found a substitute, my dear. Or have you seen me wearing the same suits for the last two years?"

Looking up, Will pondered over the question. "I have to admit that I really don't know. You could wear a suit for ten years, the way they are cut make you look dashing, no matter how old they are."

Pleased by the compliment, but too proud to acknowledge it, Hannibal took Will's plate and promised. "I will see what I can do. What is the date of your departure?"

"We will leave in the morning of the 27th of July." Smiling up at his partner because of the intense weave of relieve that transmitted through their bond, Will decided to allow Hannibal his air of superiority and not comment on the emotion. Though due to the Omega's lack of visible reaction, he teased a little, "I got an invitation from an old friend. But if you don't want to come I could always ask Alana."

The low growl that escaped Hannibal told Will exactly what the Omega thought about his Alpha leaving with another Alpha instead of with him. But seeing the playful wink, the doctor merely raised his head and decided, "This won't be necessary. I am sure I can rearrange my patients or assign them to other doctors."

He didn't know any 'old friends' of his Alpha. They had never talked a lot about Will's past, since Hannibal had not wanted to discuss his own, a courtesy for the both of them. But another man in Will's life, an unknown factor, stirred something in Hannibal. He would not leave his partner unattended during this trip that was for sure.

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When they left the plane, blinking into the late afternoon sun, Will smiled. "It seems like we won't be going through baggage claim."

When Hannibal followed his eyes, he noticed a black limousine, waiting next to the plane. A sophisticated young lady was leaning against the side, speaking to someone over a little Bluetooth device. Simultaneously she was typing on a pad in her hand, while ordering her chauffeur wordlessly to look at the luggage. The woman gave the overall impression of a business lady, tough and in charge.

That impression changed however, when she looked up for a moment and spotted Will. Instantly the tablet was put away and the earpiece vanished.

When his Alpha's approach of the young woman, his movements where somewhat slower than Hannibal was used to. The psychiatrist would nearly call it tender if mere walking would deserve such an attribute. The doctor finally understood when the two of them were close and the woman bent her head submissively. An Omega then, who would have thought so? What surprised him the most, was Will briefly caressed her exposed neck in a clearly intimate gesture, gently kissing her forehead before she looked up and happiness sparked in her eyes.

The two of them were hugging before Will pulled back and put his arm around Hannibal's waist. "Leila, may I introduce you to Dr. Hannibal Lecter, my partner."

Looking at Hannibal, Will gestured towards the woman, "Hannibal, this is Leila Willcox, the new appointed CEO of the R&D department of Willcox Enterprise. Congratulations by the way."

Offering her hand, Leila smiled warmly at Hannibal. “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Dr. Lecter. You can’t imagine how good it is so finally see someone at Will’s side.”

“The pleasure is all mine, Mrs. Willcox.” Hannibal replied, pulling her hand to his lips, indicating a kiss. Still, a part of him reached out to his Alpha, asking about the hidden meaning behind this woman’s words. A warm hand at the small of his back and a calming thought assured Hannibal that he should not worry and promised an explanation for later.

The tree of them were sitting in the air-conditioned limousine, enjoying iced drinks when Will asked, “What about Sebastian?”

Of course Hannibal had researched their host, had found him to be CEO of Willcox Enterprises ever since his father had retired. The doctor supposed that Leila and Will had met at the university. But there was something more to them. Sadly Will had barely had time and between receiving the invitation and the preparations for the week-long holiday, so they had not had any time to talk about their hosts in advance.

Hannibal had thought that Leila Willcox had been the connection between Sebastian and Will, but now the Omega felt, that his Alpha was uncharacteristically worried about Sebastian not being there. That was an interesting development, something Hannibal had to look closely upon. Also the doctor had the feeling that he was somehow familiar with both Leila and Sebastian, despite not ever having seem them before.

“He is … indisposed at the moment. We will meet him at the yacht.” Leila answered evasively.

The overwhelming weave of worry made Hannibal look at his Alpha. Such intense feelings were unusual for Will, usually only directed at his dogs.

“Leila.” Will demanded and Hannibal could hear the implied command behind his words. The psychiatrist was well aware that since the woman was not Will’s Omega, the veiled order would have a far lesser impact on her than it would have on him.

Still she squirmed a little in her seat, looking up at Will pleadingly. “You will see when we reach the boat. Please Will, just be a patient. I promise it’s nothing too serious.”

Gently reaching for the woman’s shoulder, to calm her, Will asked, “Then why are you so worried, Leila?”, but decided to let it go, when the woman averted her eyes.

Hannibal was content to realize that Will’s fingers had intertwined with his, the Alpha tried to pull serenity from their bond. Realizing that this situation was agitating Will, Hannibal forced himself to calm and offer as much tranquillity as he was able to summon. Will smiled at him gratefully.

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Once at the yard, Will boarded the ship without hesitation, leaving Hannibal behind to deal with their luggage. Not that the Omega particularly minded, but it irked him greatly to be left behind when his partner was agitated.

With Leila and the chauffeur's help he was able to follow Will swiftly. The doctor spotted him talking to a white-haired man that maintained an aura of superiority, even in his elderly state. Yet before Hannibal could catch up, the empath vanished into the the ship.

Not caring about the luggage any longer, Hannibal set the suitcases aside and followed Will, only nodding at the man who stood at the railing. He found Will knocking at a door. When it opened the doctor barely had time to see an agitated young man whipping around as soon as Will entered, sinking to his knees before his Alpha, embracing Will's waist as if the empath was a lifeline while he was drowning. The door closed, leaving Hannibal on the other side, thunderstruck by what had just happened.

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"Sebastian, oh my god what is going on?" Will wrapped the Omega into a comforting embrace, nudging him towards a sofa so that he could sit down. The older man however, apparently had no intentions of letting him go, whimpering slightly when Will tried to pull away.

He calmed significantly, when Will sat down, pulling him between his legs so that they could intensify their contact. Gently carding his fingers though Sebastian's hair, Will asked after a few minutes, when he sensed the Omega's breath evening out a little, "Hey, what's going on? I have not heard from you in over ten years and out of the blue I receive this ominous invitation. Now you are wrapped around me like I'm a hot-dog any you are a bread-roll. Tell me, darling, how can I help you?"

Will had to strain his ears to make out the muffled words, the Omega mumbled into his lap. But when he finally understood he couldn't supress a relieved laugh, something that earned him a glare from his old friend.

"You are supposed to marry. But that's brilliant, what's the problem, Sebastian? Don't you like her?"

"What? NO!" Sebastian untangled himself a little and looked up at the only Alpha who had ever proven that he could be trusted without trying to take advantage.

He whispering brokenly, "She is gorgeous, and pretty, and intelligent and marvellous and everything I could have ever wanted. She owns a software company and we are doing business with and then we fell in love and she proposed last spring."

"Then what's wrong?" Will's gentle voice had always had a tremendously soothing effect on Sebastian and the Omega basked in that feeling for a few moments. Luckily Will seemed to understand, mumbling soothing words while scratching his friend's neck comfortingly.

It took the Omega a little while to admit to it, but finally he whispered, "What if I am not good enough for her? What if she doesn't really want me? Like you didn't want me ten years

ago.”

“Sebastian,” Sadly Will shook his head. “I did not *not* claim you because I didn’t want you. You were are a strong and independent man even then. That is even more true today. I have looked you up, you have made your way both in your family's company business and now even in your private life. An Alpha who doesn’t see how special you are, who cherishes you for it, isn’t worthy of you.

“We have met when you had no real interest in a bond. You were grateful that I didn’t claim you. Don't you remember?”

Nodding slightly Sabastian admitted, “I’m just so worried, Will. I don’t know what to do anymore?”

Will smiled down at the Omega and kissed his head, before prompting him to rise. Never before had he thought that he would ever have to help someone though pre-wedding jitters. But neither had he ever imagined mating with a serial killer. It seemed that his life was full of surprises.

So he ordered gently, “What you will do is introduce me to fiancé and I will talk to her and when I come to the conclusion that she is not a gold-digging bitch that only want’s you for your money, you will banish these stupid thoughts and be happy that you have finally found someone you could put your trust into. Deal?”

Relieved that there was someone calm and rational, who could look at him and his Alpha without having economical or monetary gain in mind, Sebastian nodded and rose to his feet. Reaching for Will's hand and pulled him into a hug, he agreed, "Deal."

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Something New

A steward, bringing their luggage, interrupted Hannibal's thoughts by inviting him to see their room. If he found the doctor's behaviour – standing in front of a closed door – odd, he gave no indication. Instead he politely familiarised the guest with the features of his room, asked if the doctor needed anything and retreated wordlessly when Hannibal just shook his head.

Hannibal had heard very little of the given explanation. The scene in the master suit repeated itself over and over in his mind. Another Omega kneeling before his Alpha, as if it was the most natural thing to do. Hannibal himself had a hard time submitting to Will outside of their bedroom.

The thought of kneeling before him in public, at least when someone else was watching, was unbearable to him. The only exception had been the conference last summer, and he had done so to make a point. He had not submitted to his Alpha out in the open ever since. And now there was this stranger, who had merely looked at Will and instantly sunken to his knees. And Will had reached for him instantly, had comforted the other man without second guessing his actions.

Hannibal would not, could not tolerate that. A murderous fury rose in his mind. The Ripper wanted to thrash the room, to take everything of value and smash it to pieces. He wanted to destroy the wardrobe, slash the expensive clothes that had been provided. He wanted to take a knife, a large, blunt one and go on a murdering spree. He wanted to kill the little female Omega for being so overly familiar with his Alpha, to attack her father for siring her. He wanted to slaughter every last soul on board, leaving nothing but death, destruction and gallons of blood behind. He would save the master cabin for last, butcher the foreign Omega right before Will's eyes, proofing that …

With a barely suppressed sob Hannibal sank onto the bed, starring at his clenched hands. He would proof nothing but being unable to control his dark urges. Urges Will had accepted but never endorsed. His Alpha would be shocked and disappointed. The Chesapeake Ripper would not make a good impression, in comparison to a pliant Omega who submitted to Will oh so effortlessly. The profiler might even leave him. Being at the end of his tether, unable to deal with the level of destruction Hannibal was able and willing to cause.

The doctor was unaware of how long he had sat on the bed, starring down at his trembling fingers without really seeing them. In the end only one thought dominated his mind: there was another Omega, willing to give his Alpha what he could not. So how long would it take for the empathic profiler to realize that he could do so much better than a murdering psychopath?

When Will finally entered, chuckling slightly, that was Hannibal's last straw. Of course his Alpha was having more fun with another. Evading Will's gaze, he rose from the bed, busying himself with their luggage. At least this way nobody could blame him for neglecting his

duties as an Omega. He did not even realize the oddness of these thoughts. That such an idea would have never have occurred to him under different circumstances.

"A marriage, can you believe it?" Will grinned, looking at Hannibal who whipped around, looking at him with utter hurt.

Confused Will tilted his head, looking at his apparently disconcerted Omega.

"Hannibal, what is it?" Approaching his partner Will opened himself to their bond, not realizing what a tremendous mistake he had just made.

Within a heartbeat his mind was overwhelmed by Hannibal's feelings. There was anger and hurt, sadness and murderous intent, desperation and love, but dominating was despondency so strong, that it took the empath's breath away and make him choke out a strangled sob. His brain felt like it was on fire and with a cry of anguish he fell to his knees, clutching his head.

Instantly Hannibal was upon him, but the pain in his Omega's mind only got worse when Will flinched back from his touch.

But the empath knew that touch would only intensify the feelings. Urgently Will whispered, "You have to stop, please Hannibal. I can't take it, not all of you at once. You have to stop, *please!* You are hurting me."

Now it was Hannibal's turn to recoil. No matter what had happened or would happen in the future, he had never wanted to hurt his Alpha, the first and only person who had ever seen all of him and accepted it. But Will's pain only served to agitate him further, making it even harder to rein in his emotions.

Barely thinking through the storm of sentiments that overwhelmed his mind, Will reached for his Omega, touched his neck and enforced a command with every last bit of dominance he could conjure, "**Sleep!**"

The effect on Hannibal was immediate. A weave of fatigue washed over him. He felt as if a blanked had been pulled over his feelings, making them bearable again. It allowed him to think past the maelstrom of worries that had threatened to drown him. He saw his Alpha breathing again, brushing away some tears before looking into his eyes, enforcing his command once again, "Hannibal, **sleep**!" and with that the doctor lost consciousness.

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A knock on the door brought Will back to himself, and he heard Leila's concern when she asked, "Will, Dr. Lecter, is everything alright?"

"Yes Leila, please tell your father that we will be with him shortly. That we are sorry for being rude and that we will greet him properly soon." The empath answered.

"Are you sure, I thought I heard you …"

"Leila, just go."

Will hated giving commands, especially to one of his friends. But right now his own Omega was his main priority. Hannibal had always been composed and his overwhelming emotions worried Will a great deal. Crouching closer to the sleeping figure, Will put Hannibal's head on his lap and leaned against the foot of the bed. He was afraid to wake his partner. Hannibal was a force to be reckoned with when calm, but the displayed distress was untypical for his partner.

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Taking a deep breath he slowly pushed into his partner's mind. There was darkness, so much darkness and violence, blood and overall this suffocating feeling of desperation. Hannibal stood in the middle of it, calm once again now that his emotions were surrounding him instead of permeating every fibre of his being.

He turned towards his Alpha who had rendered him unconscious with but a single command. "Have you pushed me back into my mind to make it easier to severe our bond?"

Confused Will asked, "Why would you think that, my love?"

"Don't!" Hannibal approached his Alpha. "Don't lie to me, Will. I have seen this other Omega, kneeling for you freely. Don’t tell me that you don't want that, because we both know that it would be a lie! And then you return to our room, speaking of marriage. What am I supposed to think?"

Gesturing into the void of violence that surrounded them, Hannibal accused Will, "You have known this Omega before, don't even bother denying it. You have even entertained a relationship with him! Didn't you?"

"Of course I was in a relationship with Sebastian. You knew that before we came here. You saw him in my mind."

Suddenly realizing why the two Omegas had felt so familiar, Hannibal retreated. "Care to share the details of this relationship with your current Omega?"

"My current …? Hannibal what …" Taking a deep breath, aware of the futility of the gesture since he was in Hannibal's mind, Will offered his hand. "Come with me, leave this darkness behind and let me show you what you want to know. At least that way you can be convinced of my sincerity."

Slightly reluctant Hannibal reached for Will's hand and allowed the empath to pull the both of them into his own head.

They found themselves in the middle of a stream, on a warm summer's day. The sun was high in the sky and an air of peacefulness surrounded them. Will took a deep breath and raised his face towards the sky before he looked at Hannibal again.

Gesturing towards the water, Hannibal saw reflections, of Sebastian and Leila, much younger, laughing and joking with Will while swimming in the sea. Scenes of a shared lunch between the three of them in a fancy restaurant, where Will had felt quite uncomfortable. Sebastian lying on Will's couch, looking up at the Alpha with a worn but content smile on his face.

"I found Leila in the showers of my dorm-room in my second year at the university. She had miscalculated her circle and had gone into heat. I helped her through it, like I have helped you. Without claiming her, leaving her free to find a partner she truly wanted instead of one that was conveniently there when her body demanded one."

A scene in Will's room revealed itself, a much younger Sebastian Willcox arguing with a much younger Will Graham.

"Sebastian had approached me two months later. Offering an apartment for the services I have rendered his family. I declined of course, but after three weeks of struggles his father informed me that there was really no way for the family to take back their gift. An apartment had been bought in my name so I could do with it whatever I wanted. I accepted in the end, grateful that I did not have to sleep where other Alphas gave me a hard time for not being 'dominant' enough."

Hannibal listened silently, dread pooling in his stomach once again when Will continued. "A few months later Sebastian came to my doorstep. He was alone and … well, long story short he was in heat and begged me to help him. To do the same for him I had done for his sister. I complied of course. After avoiding me for quite a while after that we found a way to be friends with benefits, without strings attached."

"So you are telling me, that I am but the third Omega you have serviced, or where there others you have neglected to mention?"

Looking at his Omega, Will deciphered his emotions that were so much easier to deal with now. Most of all, because one feeling dominated all others: jealousy. Not only could the empath relate to that, he was able to see past it with ease.

"Yes Hannibal, you were the third Omega I have helped though a heat. Do you really think I would have dared to touch you, had I not known – without the shadow of doubt – that I would be strong enough to hold back and not claim you? That I would have taken any risks with someone as special as you?"

Touching his Omega's face, relieved that Hannibal did not pull back, Will kissed him gently. "No, Hannibal, you were not the first, but do not doubt for a single second that you will be the last."

Leaning into the embrace his partner offered, Hannibal whispered, "I am sorry for hurting you."

"Don't worry, my love. I have dealt with worse." Tenderly caressing his partner's back, Will uttered one last command, "But now Hannibal, you have to **wake up**!"

Once the Omega had opened his eyes, he rose from his place on the floor, offering his hand to Will. "I assume that we should greet our host now."

"Him and hopefully Sebastian's fiancé. I can't wait to meet the Alpha that has my friend all tied up in knots. He is quite ruthless at work. It will be entertaining to see how he reacts on a personal level."

Hannibal admitted to himself, that he would enjoy seeing the other Omega 'tied up in knots'. A little reproach for causing him so much unnecessary worry.

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Something Borrowed

With this crisis averted, Hannibal and Will made quick use of the shower and changed before joining the Willcox-family on deck. Will introduced Mr. Willcox senior and Hannibal had to supress a smile when he saw the scrutinizing gaze the old man taxed him with. For a brief moment the doctor entertained various ideas what would happen, if the family found him lacking as Will’s Omega. Every reaction he had witnessed so far, told him that these people cherished his Alpha and though still a little jealous, Hannibal was grateful for that. It was good to know that someone else but him saw Will for the special person he was, instead of merely making use of his abilities.

After dinner, where Hannibal complimented the chef, something that made Will beam with delight, a sophisticated woman in a white dress and a briefcase joined them for desert. During the meal Hannibal had forced himself to talk to Sebastian and had found that he didn't dislike the man as much as he had suspected. He had admired his polite but determined behaviour, when the man had excused himself from the table to take a call, audibly berating the person who called about a business proposal that had lost its value at 5 p.m. the same day.

When he returned to the table he merely stated "Three-hundred-thousand dollars". That comment earned him a high-five from his sister and a proud smile from his father.

Sebastian explained that he had just finalized a deal with a potential business partner who had tested his determination by purposefully letting the deadline Sebastian had given him pass. Therefore the CEO of Willcox-Enterprises had been able to save more than a quarter of a million dollars, since said business partner had been adamant about wanting to finalize the deal nevertheless. A nice penalty for unprofessional behaviour as everybody agreed.

When the woman in the white dress approached them, Sebastian practically melted the second he laid eyes on her. Mr. Willcox introduced the lady as 'Samantha Shaw' and offered her a place at the table. Politely the Alpha shook both Will and Hannibal's hand before kissing the Omega by her side affectionately. The dopey eyes of Sebastian and the adoring gaze of Samantha left no doubt that those two were smitten with each other.

The guarded behaviour of the Alpha and her open affection for her Omega convinced Will that she honestly cared about Sebastian. Especially when she talked about a business proposal she didn't want Willcox Enterprise to invest into, because she saw too little chance of success. When asked about it, Miss Shaw revealed, that she felt not comfortable with Sebastian supporting one of her companies projects when the reward was not more or less assured. So after watching them for a while, Will relaxed into his seat, picking up a conversation with Leila about her new position.

When Hannibal talked to Miss Shaw, she was respectful and not at all as condescending as most Alphas, when finding out about his designation. All in all, it was a pleasant evening. Still Will and Hannibal asked to be excused quite early, since traveling had exhausted them. The turmoil of emotions both had endured this afternoon remained unmentioned, though Hannibal was sure that it was still at the forefront of everybody's mind.

That unpleasant thoughts had pushed to the surface of Will's mind became clear, when his Alpha twisted and turned in bed that night, unable to sleep peacefully. Hannibal did his best to sooth him and once Will calmed a little, the Omega fell asleep again. He woke again, when he felt Will rising, tapping towards the cabin-door clumsily before leaving the room.

With a frustrated sigh, Hannibal rose as well, put on a sweater and took Will's dressing gown before following his Alpha. More than two years had passed without an incident. These surroundings however, or Sebastian, or other bad memories had clearly sent Will sleepwalking again. Hannibal was reasonably sure that Will was sleepwalking since the empath would never exit their room in nothing but boxer-shorts.

As expected Will was shuffling down the corridor, to uncoordinated to walk fast. Fascinated where this was going, Hannibal followed at a distance, only glimpsing ahead to make sure that Will would not hurt himself by running into anything. He stopped in the doorway the moment Will stopped in front of the railing. His Alpha didn't move to go any further. The psychiatrist would never allow Will to endanger himself by climbing the barrier.

He was surprised when, out of the blue, Sebastian approached his partner, a tumbler in hand that was only filled half an inch. The Omega paid close attention without interrupting.

"I'm sorry, you know?" Sebastian started. "I was a fool, I needed you, but I had no intention of upsetting you. Nor your Omega for that matter. Leila told me that she heard some commotion in your cabin after you left me."

Clearly unaware that the Alpha was not listening, the Omega leaned onto the railing and continued his monologue after taking a sip. "I'm just so worried. I know exactly what to do when it comes to business. But whenever something concerns Sam, I am just … I guess I am lost, because I want to get everything right. I want to be the man she wants. But I am so far away from the average, pliant, submissive Omega that I don't know if I can ever fulfil her expectations."

Trailing his fingers through his hair, Sebastian sighted. "I know you are right. That if she fell in love with me when doing business, she loves me for who I am, not for what I should be. But it's hard. Really hard to be yourself when everything around you tells you how the perfect Omega should be."

Looking up at Will, who still stood motionless, Sebastian turned towards him fully, apparently worried about the lack of response. "Are you still angry with me? I didn't want to drag you into this, I just didn't know who else …"

Getting anxious at the lack of response, the man interrupted himself and raising his hand to touch the Alpha. "Will?"

But before the Omega could shake his Alpha awake, Hannibal stepped onto the deck. "Don't touch him please. He won't do well with being woken by an unfamiliar face."

Whipping around, Sebastian staggered back. "I am … I didn't hurt him! What is going on? Is he alright?"

Approaching his Alpha, Hannibal drew a strange kind of satisfaction from the fact that he, and not this man who had known Will long before him, knew how to deal with his partner during an episode. Hannibal gently draped the dressing gown over Will's shoulder. Stepping so close to his Alpha that they were nearly touching, the psychiatrist supported him in finding his way back to consciousness by gently sending affectionate thoughts through their bond.

Aware that, this might take a few moments, Hannibal turned towards the other Omega. "You did not hurt him per se, you just brought back unpleasant memories, or so it seems. Will had not sleepwalked for more than two years. Not ever since we bonded."

Hanging his head, Sebastian berated himself quietly, "I should not have invited him."

Glad that Will was slowly stirring, Hannibal shook his head. "Knowing Will, I can be reasonably sure, that he would prefer being here for you, over hearing about your worries at a later time. Aware that he could have helped you, but not getting the chance to do so."

When Will raised his head, wrapping his dressing gown around himself reflexively, the young man looked confused at Sebastian before turning towards Hannibal, dropping his head resigned. "It happened again. How inconvenient."

Aware that addressing the matter in public would be futile, Hannibal asked instead, "Would you like some hot chocolate, Will?"

Will smiled a little, he and Hannibal had not entertained such a late-night ritual for quite some time, and nodded. Hannibal asked Sebastian if he was allowed to use the caboose. It did not take the excellent chef long to find the necessary ingredients and after barely half an hour, the three of them returned to the deck, each with a steaming cup of hot chocolate with whipped cream in hand.

Hannibal was well aware of Sebastian's attentive gaze when he did not chose a cushion on the floor, but the corner of the couch. As the psychiatrist had expected, Will snuggled into his arms as soon as he was seated, content to sip his hot chocolate and enjoying Hannibal's warm embrace.

Both were concerned about Will's sleep-walking, their bond revealed that much, but they would not discuss this in front of Sebastian.

Hannibal kept his partner warm and put away his own mug once he felt Will drifting off. With practised ease, he caught the cup the moment it slid from Will's grasp, when the Alpha succumbed to slumber once again. Reaching for a blanked he had covered Will with, he wrapped it closer around his partner, to keep him warm.

After enjoying the calm atmosphere for a little while, Sebastian asked, "How did the two of you get together? Will had told me that you were, or are his psychiatrist. But he didn't reveal

any private information."

"From what Will had told me, we came together the same way the two of you did."

Snickering quietly, Sebastian took another sip of his sweet drink before asking, "I assume you consider me a fool for not wanting him as my Alpha?"

"On the contrary," Hannibal disagreed, "I think of you were a blessing. For without you, Will would have never dared to approach me when my heat hit me."

"But after your heat, you wanted him."

"Not for quite some time to be honest," the psychiatrist admitted. "It took me quite a while to understand that Will Graham was exactly what I needed."

"I am glad."

"About what?"

Smiling affectionately at Hannibal's Alpha, an expression that the Omega wanted to wipe from Sebastian's face violently, the other Omega whispered, "I don't know how much you know of him, a lot since you are his psychiatrist, I assume. But from everything he had told me, and all I have seen today, I think you too, are exactly what Will Graham needs. Not just the other way around."

Surprised about the unexpected compliment, Hannibal asked, "Would you care to elaborate on that?"

Shrugging, Sebastian said, "You were hovering protectively all evening. Whenever someone was addressing Will you watched that person carefully, as if prepared to jump to Will's defence if his opponent said something unpleasant. I assume you have a lot of experience with unpleasant conversations being thrown at Will."

Smiling the Omega said, "Will Graham is a good person, Dr. Lecter. He is willing to help, to fight for the people who can't fight for themselves. At the University he often got into trouble for that. But there is one person he never fights for. One person he accepts every plight for, no matter now unfair or unpleasant."

Tenderly looking down at his partner, Hannibal whispered, "Himself."

When Sebastian nodded, the two Omegas looked at each other until Sebastian added softly, "Will deserves to have someone fighting for him. I am glad that he had found you."

"Not all Omegas are pliant and submissive, Mr. Willcox. Sometimes forceful and dominant is exactly what our Alpha's need. But now I would very much like to return Will to our bed. He won't feel well rested if we spent the night on deck."

With a polite nod, the other man rose. "Sebastian, please. Here, let me help you. I can …"

Looking into the other Omega's eyes Hannibal rose form the couch and lifted Will into his arms effortlessly. "Thank you Sebastian, but I am able to deal with my Alpha all on my own."

Understanding the barely concealed 'hands off' warning, Sebastian nodded once again. "In that case, I wish you a pleasant night. And thank you … for the hot chocolate."

Relieved about having established his position, Hannibal returned to their cabinet and gently placed Will on their bed.

When he wrapped his arms around his Alpha from behind, he heard Will whisper, "That was rude."

"You were awake?"

"Only for the last part."

Pulling Will closer, unwilling to give in, Hannibal growled a little. "It doesn't matter. You are mine and he is not to touch you."

Intertwining their fingers, kissing Hannibal's digits softly, before pulling them to his chest, Will assured his partner. "No one will ever touch me again, my love. I am yours and yours alone."

Content with this admission, the Omega was finally able to succumb to sleep again. For the rest of the night no one disturbed their slumber.

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Something Blue

Though the Willcox-siblings had to see to their respective jobs, Sebastian's month long absence had to be prepared for, there still was enough time for the four of them to go on boat trips together where they would either fish or snorkel.

As Hannibal had suspected, Will with his Zen-like attitude as soon as he had a fishing-rod in hand caught more fish than he, Sebastian and Leila combined. But the tranquillity and happiness his Alpha drew from the activity was enough to make up for his meagre catch. Still Hannibal received the most of compliments, since he had taken it upon himself to prepare their catches personally.

The swimming and fishing was enjoyable for them, Leila and Sebastian showed them some interesting riffs and exotic fishes but Will clearly preferred to stay above water rather than beyond. The highlight of their snorkelling trip was a little cave Leila showed them, and after pointing out the beauty of it, she excused herself and told them that they would be expected back at the boat in about an hour.

The cool interior of the cave was a welcome change to the hot air outside and it did not take Will and Hannibal long to make good use of their solitude. Soon the echoes of their desire reflected from the wall but when they both flinched profoundly, surprised by a crab leaving the water right beside them, clicking and clacking her way into the darkness of the cave. The both of them laughed so very hard and aborted their play in favour of a soft bed and enough light to see potential voyeurs.

At Leila's surprised look at their early return, Will only stated, "Crab", when boarding the boat.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Until now Will had avoided Hannibal's attempts to make him talk about the bad memories that had made him rise in his sleep at the beginning of the week. Now, with the four of them looking over the railing, watching a distant shore-line with cold beer or, in Hannibal's case, chilled white wine, Will revealed quietly. "I recalled my time at the University. The year prior to my first boat-trip with the two of you."

Gesturing towards the siblings, Leila and Sebastian looked at him, and when the Alpha didn't continue, Sebastian contemplated, "You recalled the bullies who gave you a hard time in your dorm."

When Will just nodded wordlessly, the Omega continued with a soft smile. "You thought me one of them when we met the first time during the mid-term-break. You even threatened me with the campus police."

Chuckling slightly, Will admitted, "Well, you actually were breaking and entering, though I didn't lock my door. I have had enough unpleasant visits from 'proper' Alphas during my

first year and a half, to suspect the worst."

When Hannibal growled involuntarily at that thought, Will put a soothing hand on his Omega's arm. "Sebastian did nothing like that. He merely thanked me for services rendered and offered the apartment I have told you about."

When Leila only smiled at that and lowered her head, the Alpha realized something that had never occurred to him, "You! It had been your idea to begin with. You chose the apartment for me!"

Bending her head in agreement, Leila revealed softly, "Of course I had. Money had never been an issue and the prices for property had not been that high. I only lived in the dorm-rooms because friends of mine did too. But you were not happy there. I could tell after we first met. I had watched you for several weeks before suggesting an off-campus apartment where nobody would bother you."

"If you watched me, why did you never approach me?" Will wondered.

Sighing deeply, Leila looked into the Alpha's eyes, something she would have never dared back in their time. Will was incredibly proud of her for coming such a long way when she told him, "Because I was ashamed. I have said … well I honestly can't even recall the things I have said during my head, I never can, not even now. But I was embarrassed. I thought that you would prefer me to stay away from you, that you would be embarrassed to be seen with me in public."

Gently cupping the female Omega's cheek, Will kissed her forehead and whispered, "I could have never been ashamed of being seen with you."

Smiling, clearly enjoying the gesture, Leila chuckled. "Yes, well Sebastian told me so and I sat with you after that. Didn't I?"

Trying to make sense of all these revelations and how they were important for his Alpha's sleepwalking, Hannibal considered, "So unpleasant memories of your first time at the university brought you up at night?"

Shrugging, Will agreed. "You know how I feel around people. Even if they are emotionally stable. Now try to imagine me in a hormone-charged surrounding where half the Alpha's feel the need to point out to me how inappropriate my behaviour is and how I am giving Omega's the wrong ideas about how the 'dominant designation' should behave."

"That is extraordinarily foolish," Hannibal stated drily.

"Welcome to the average, American University." His Alpha stated in union, clinging his drink with Leila and Sebastian who whole-heartedly agreed.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Two days prior to the wedding, Hannibal and Will borrowed a car and enjoyed a little day-trip into the surrounding area. They returned with a frame and several sheets of high grade

parchment as well as a beautiful blue hair-band for Emily.

After their initial dinner, it had become an accustomed tradition for the Steward women to join Hannibal and Will once a month. Additionally when something exciting like a carnival or another event was due, Hannibal was usually the first to be invited by the little girl.

Her mother had asked Will not to shower her daughter with presents, since she had found several paintings and little tokens Hannibal had created for her in a jewellery box in Emily's room. Respecting the mother's wishes to not spoil the little girl, Hannibal and Will had decided upon a budget for gifts with her, and the artistically woven silk hair-band was just in range.

Asking for pictures of the bride and groom, Hannibal escaped the chaos and the pre-wedding jitters of both bride and groom by finding a safe-haven in one of the cafés at the port, taking his time to draw a picture of the pair in deep-blue ink. When he showed it to Will the same evening, after the Alpha had fallen face-first onto their bed after remaining at Sebastian's side to calm the Omega down all day, the empath was once again amazed by his partner's talent.

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They went to bed early that evening, since they didn't want to join the hustle and bustle that held the yacht firmly in its clutches. Though the main event would be held in an exclusive club in town, friends and family were expected around ten p.m. to return to the boat and celebrate with the happy couple far into the morning hours. Since nothing but the best was expected from a family like the Willcox, everybody was doing their best to make this party memorable and perfect.

Since this would be their last, peaceful night before their departure the day after tomorrow, Hannibal was surprised to find Will nudging him awake around half past two in the morning. Covering his partner's lips with his fingers, the Alpha gestured for Hannibal to rise and follow him silently. When they reached the rear of the boat, only clad in their night-wear and their dressing gowns, Will smiled mischievously, when taking off his boxers. Turning around, the Alpha let his dressing gown sink from his shoulders and put it over the railing, before sliding soundlessly into the water.

Aware that his Alpha had to be stark naked now Hannibal only hesitated for a heartbeat before he followed. Joining his Alpha in the water he caught up with Will who glided silently though the dark-blue water that reflected the brilliant moon above them. A little while away from the harbour, Will pulled himself onto an artificial island that was reserved for visitors of the local beach. Not a soul was in sight, when Will spread out his partner and started kissing him passionately.

Taking a considerable amount of time for exploring his Omega, the Alpha had his partner panting and arching into the contact in no time. Whenever Hannibal made a sound, Will stopped his caresses and put a finger to his partner's lips, indicating for him to be silent. Though it took a conscious effort, the Omega tried his very best. When Will turned him around, to shower is back and rear end with the same considerate affection Hannibal had to muffle his groans with digging his teeth into his own forearm.

Having no lube at hand, Will took his time to kiss and lick and stretch Hannibal as best as he could, using spit and gentle motions to make this adventure as pleasurable for his Omega as possible. When the doctor through his head back and moaned a desperate, “Please.” The Alpha needed no further incentive to sink into the pliant body beneath him. Muffling his partner’s sounds by covering his mouth with his own hand Will started a slow and teasing rhythm. But soon this was not enough for the both of them.

With barely supressed groans Hannibal pushed back into his partner, holding Will’s hand over his mouth in place with his own, because the Alpha stopped every time things got ‘too loud’. However he could not hold back any longer when Will pulled him back, and reached for the doctor’s neglected erection. It took him no more than half a dozen strokes for Hannibal to come all over Will’s hand. Stimulated by his Omega’s clenching muscles Will spilled into him soon after and sank onto the platform, pulling Hannibal with him and away from the sticky spot they had made.

For several long moment, they both just lay in the soft light of the moon, watching the dark boats and the glittering skyline of the nearby city. Unwilling to spoil this adventure by profanities as talking, the two of them glided into the water a little while later, washing away the proof of their lovemaking by dipping the artificial island slightly.

When approaching the boat again, Will seemed to have no problem telling it apart from all the other dark ships. The moment they put on their dressing gowns again, the door to the lower deck opened and Sebastian and Samantha emerged. Hannibal felt a little unsettled when Will and Sebastian merely shared a wink before the soon-to-be wedded sank into the water, while he and his Alpha returned to their room.

After a brief shower to wash away the salt, Will whispered quietly, once again proofing that he had no troubles deciphering what was on his partner’s mind. “Sebastian and I had enjoyed late night swimming in the past. But I never made love to him. That was something I only ever did with you.”

“He was your first in so many aspects of your life.” Hannibal admitted somewhat strained. “I don’t like it.”

Gently Will caressed his partner’s wet hair, reminding him. “I was not your first for many things either, but I definitely will be your last for the most of them.”

Pushing away the dark memories of his first Alpha, Hannibal kissed Will’s palm before hugging his partner from behind. “True”, he admitted. And after a while he added in a whisper, “Thank you for taking me for a swim tonight.”

Chuckling Will snuggled deeper into Hannibal’s embrace. “It was my solemn pleasure, my love.” Before catching a few more hours of sleep prior to an exciting wedding-day.

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Unexpected Departure

The wedding itself was beyond glorious. Every member of the Willcox' social circle attended and both Will and Hannibal tried to be on their best behaviour, despite most of these strangers looking down on them, since they did not have an annual income in the sextuple digits. The party became more casual and far more pleasant once it was relocated to the boat. Hannibal's present was a huge success and both Sebastian and Samantha didn't hesitate to share their delight about it. Still the compliments were but a bonus to the pride that lit up his Alpha's eyes, when Hannibal offered it to the couple.

Their way back home was strenuous and when they finally closed the door of Hannibal's mansion behind them, they were dead on their feet. Despite Hannibal looking forward to cook his own kitchen again, they had agreed to pick up a small diner on their way from the airport. So with club sandwiches and a chilled vino blanch, they sat in Hannibal's small garden and enjoyed the sunset in the safety of their own home.

After that trip, everything returned more or less to normal. Will saw to his students, Hannibal to both boring patients who invented their own problems and one little girl who was delighted to receive the present they had bought for her. She even insisted that her mother wove it into her hair immediately before closing the door to Hannibal's waiting room once again, to give her therapist her undivided attention.

The only downside of a regular working schedule was the obnoxious Alpha who pestered Hannibal once again with his views of how the world should go and how very little human behaviour made sense. The Alpha who still preferred to dress in clashing colours used his time with the psychiatrist to lay out how, in his opinion, Alphas and Omegas should behave and how very little Betas had to offer to modern society.

Hannibal being quite irritated that evening, snapping at Will for touching him during diner preparations, worried the Alpha. When he tried to approach his Omega mentally Hannibal just snapped their connection shut, grumbling angrily that he very well had the right to keep his private thoughts to himself. Dinner was tense and Will decided to give his partner some room afterwards and drove to Wolfs Trap. The last thing he wanted was for Hannibal to feel confined by their relationship.

Will was well aware that he had spent the majority of his time in Hannibal's home, he only saw to his dogs in the morning, before his lectures started. Maybe Sebastian and Samantha had brought doubts to his partner's mind of how a relationship between an Alpha and an Omega should go. Maybe Hannibal wanted more, a commitment Will was not ready to give, since he felt not stable enough for it yet. Maybe Hannibal wanted more freedom. It was hard to tell with the psychiatrist not expressing his wishes.

Watching his to remaining dogs, roaming around, he smiled when they showed off their catching skills eagerly when they found sticks for him to throw. His newest and smallest dog

Coco, lay a dead squirrel at his feet, excitedly looking up at Will to receive praise for her successful hunt. As was expected, Will petted and admired her and played with his little pack before retreating for the night. Both dogs somehow seemed to notice that something as off with their Alpha. That and the fact that he barely slept at Wolfs Trap any more, made Winston and Coco sleep as close as possible to his bed.

Not willing to incommode his Omega by checking on him through their bond, Will lay awake, starring out of the window. He worried about Hannibal while watching the moon travel through the sky. Midnight was approaching when he heard a car pull up in front of his house. Silently he reached for the gun in his nightstand and rose from his bed to hide in the shadows, prepared to scare off a potential thief who thought his house easy loot.

When the front door was unlocked with a key, Will secured his weapon and put it away again. Nobody but his elderly neighbour and his Omega had the key to his home and Will doubted very much that Miss Travers would come here in the middle of the night. Returning to bed, pulling up another blanket, Will watched his partner standing in the middle of his home, looking at the bed, his dogs, really everywhere but at his Alpha.

For a few breathless moments, Will waited most anxiously if Hannibal had just come to call their relationship off, or at least request a break. His Omega however stood in the middle of the room, apparently lost of what to say or do.

Finally the doctor whispered, "Will, I …"

But before Hannibal could finish his sentence, Will had opened himself to their bond again. If he was to be brushed aside like an inconvenience, he wanted to know the reasons for it. But all the Alpha could feel was regret and anxiety. And all of a sudden everything became clear. Remembering about the obnoxious Alpha, his regular lunches with Hannibal that had only ended because Will had received another class to fill in. Hannibal brisk behaviour and him making a stand in 'his sanctuary' as they both called the kitchen.

Will called himself a fool for ever doubting Hannibal's conviction, so he merely raised the blanket and opened his arms for his Omega. Shedding his clothes the older man didn't hesitate for a second and wrapped himself around Will in a heartbeat. Gently kissing his partner's head, Will whispered at his tense partner. "Why do we have to make everything so complicated for ourselves? After the wedding I am constantly worried that you are expecting me to be strong and determined, firm on my feet ready to support you every hour of every day like Samantha does for Sebastian."

Surprised by this admission, Hannibal had never even thought about Will being anything but perfect, the Omega admitted. "After every appointment with Mr. Tailer, I feel like bleaching my eyes due to his obnoxious choice of clothes, and stuffing my ears after hearing him shouting for a solid hour. All he goes on about is how Alpha’s and Omega’s are supposed to behave."

Confused where this was going, Will gently carded his fingers though Hannibal's hair and listened attentively.

"But most of all I hate his view of the world because it reflects that of so many others. How Alphas are the 'superior race' and Omegas are there to serve. Of how little support Betas provide for modern society and how useless the average human is. He is completely delusional, I am aware of that, but sometimes these things just get to me.

“I should not have snapped at you in the kitchen. You are everything I could wish for, supportive and understanding, but sometimes the thoughts of how I *should* be sneak up on me and I can't brush them aside. So I put up a fight where none is needed."

Gently nudging his Omega's chin, so that Hannibal would look up at him, Will tenderly brushed his lips over his partner's forehead, assuring him, "You are perfect, just the way you are. And if you have a patient who makes you think otherwise, you should get rid of him."

Smiling a little, Hannibal shook his head. "We have talked about this. I just can't abandon a patient just because his personal views don't agree with me."

"You should if he's crazy!" Will mumbled sleepily. Having Hannibal with him once again dispelled all of his worries and now the long day was demanding it’s toll.

Chuckling lowly the psychiatrist answered, "I'm afraid for taking mental illness into consideration for not seeing someone, I am in the wrong line of duty."

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Of course their discussion about this special patient continued, one time even publicly with polite words but the disagreement was still palpable when they were having lunch in a new café that had opened close to Hannibal's office. Still the doctor was adamant about keeping the Alpha, just as much as Will wanted him to sign him off to another psychiatrist since his beliefs unsettled his partner. As always they agreed to disagree and returned to work.

Mr. Tailer however, who had enjoyed an exquisite lunch, had had the both of them under close scrutiny ever since learning of Dr. Lecter's designation. He was a firm believer in traditional role models and the easiness with which Dr. Lecter ignored his own Alpha's recommendations irked him greatly. He had tried a casual approach. Had shared his believes and his view of what was right with the psychiatrist during their sessions, but it seemed that Hannibal Lecter was unable to tolerate any other opinion but his own. Not even that of his own Alpha.

A part of Mr. Tailer wanted to pity Will Graham for having such a stubborn Omega, but in the end it was the Alpha's decision. He had bonded with him and was now stuck with Hannibal Lecter. Investigating the Alpha he had discovered him to be a lecturer for the FBI academy and a quite loud and obnoxious website called Tattle-Crime had revealed Will Graham's empathy and the work he did as a field agent. The mental strength that was necessary for such a job demanded honest respect.

Since the profiler was under enough pressure in his professional life, his private life should not add to that. Therefore Mr. Tailer saw but one chance to help this relationship that would

fail sooner or later, since the Omega was not willing to remember his duties. That was too sad to contemplate, since Hannibal Lecter would most likely not get another chance at finding such an understanding Alpha who tolerated his desire to work and entertain a private life outside of his relationship.

Unwilling to add to the Alpha's burden, Mr. Tailer decided on a different approach to save this relationship. Alphas and Omegas were breaking up over the most banal things, despite the pull their biology had on them. He didn't want that for his psychiatrist and his Alpha, who was beyond compliant for his Omega's needs. Will Graham truly deserved a partner who behaved better.

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All Wrong

Chapter Notes

For the second time, ever since starting this story I will write an author's note. Some of you might remember, that this story went on hiatus some four weeks ago. I took this time off because I could not concentrate, I used writing as a therapeutic method to deal with the fact that my dad had been brought to the hospital and was diagnosed with lung-cancer (final stage). He is getting therapy right now, but at best he gains a few months.

So I have to admit that my mind is not a very nice place right now, and I am afraid the last part of the story will reflect that. I always wanted to go there, but when editing it, I realize that it is a lot darker than I have intended it to be at the beginning. Still, this is how it goes and if you are here for the fluff and the feels and the sunshine between the dark chapters, please stop reading, because you won't like what's coming.

I appreciated the support and the comments of each and every one of you. Really they meant a lot to me, because it told me that my story served two purposes: me getting out of my head for a little while and entertaining you. I still want to entertain you, but I want you to be aware of what's about to come.

A big thanks for all of you who have stayed with me until now.

Love
Anchanee

The next time Hannibal had an appointment with Mr. Tailer, the Alpha showed a lot more modesty and restrain when choosing his words. After the countless discussions he had had with Will concerning this patient, Hannibal was glad to see this development. It showed that the therapy was successful after all. Over the course of a few weeks his instinctual disclamation of the Alpha lessened little by little. It was refreshing to hear him talk about other things but his hard-lined believes of how Alphas and Omegas should behave. With everything else, no matter how narrow-minded the opinion, the doctor could deal easily, had done so for most of his nomination as a psychiatrist in Baltimore.

So when the other man brought a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Herb Lamb Vineyard in Napa Valley, Hannibal accepted it gratefully and savoured a glass after their appointment. He wrote down his notes and …

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At first Will was irritated, then he was angry and finally he was worried when Hannibal did not return in time for dinner Wednesday evening. The Alpha was always on edge when

knowing that Hannibal had had an appointment with the infamous Mr. Tailer. But the Omega not returning in time was even worse. The doctor’s impeccable manners always made him call or at least sent a text to explain if he was delayed.

There had been last minute patients on occasion and the fact that neither from Hannibal’s landline nor from his mobile came any reaction to Will’s calls and texts, spoke in favour of a an unexpected patient. Maybe Emily had had troubles at school. Maybe there had been an incident and Hannibal had been asked to offer his opinion. There were hundreds of good reasons for his partner to be late, but none of them eased Will’s mind in the slightest.

Around ten, by now it was too late for any kind of work, Will started to call the local hospitals if there had been any accidents. By eleven he started to call the local police, around midnight he woke Jack and explained his worries. As expected the agent told him that they could not do anything before Hannibal had been missing for at least twenty-four hours. But he advised Will to go to the doctor’s office and look for clues himself.

Berating himself for not thinking about that in the first place, Will was in his beat-up car a few minutes later.

As expected, Will found his partner's office dark and devoid of any inhabitant. Still when he lit the lamps and looked around he felt that something was not right. He couldn't put his finger on it, everything seemed to be in impeccable order. But despite the apparent perfection the profiler walked around, touched the furniture, the decorations, the books … yet nothing jumped out to him, explaining Hannibal’s unexpected absence.

When he reached Hannibal's desk, he saw a fine ring of dried liquid on the desk pad. Confused Will looked at the spot and sat down in front of it. He was well aware that Hannibal liked to have a glass after a particularly taxing appointment, while he composed his notes. But the man he knew would never, ever leave a stain on his work-place. Looking up he found Hannibal's pen oriented with the cap to the right. Will knew the doctor to be ambidextrous, but Hannibal almost always preferred to write with his right hand, therefore the pen should be oriented differently.

Looking for his partner’s latest journal, he found it in the burrow behind the desk and pulled out the latest volume. Surprised by its thickness, Will put it on the desk and opened it. Shocked he reached for the black Omega-Chain that threatened to slide to the floor. Following his matriculate notes Hannibal had left a personal message for Will, written in his floating and beautiful calligraphy:

Something has to change.

Please give me time.

Don 't look for me.

Love Hannibal

Ripping the page out of the book, Will pocketed it and left the psychiatrist's office to go to headquarters.

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When Hannibal came around he felt dizzy and slightly nauseous. It took him quite a while to access his situation. He felt like his head was stuffed with cotton, rendering him unable to keep a clear line of thought. After some struggling he found himself chained to a wall, on a small cot with a thin mattress. The room was bare otherwise, with but the tiniest window and a door with no handle. Not that a door-nob would have been of any use to him, since his hands were bound behind his back.

When he tried to rise into an upright position, he started to feel sick, so he lay back again, looking around. The walls were grey, as was the cover of the mattress he was lying on. He felt hot, but with his hands bound, he couldn't do anything. A part of him feverishly wished for something to drink, a chance to rid himself of his tie, but every fumble with his hands only brought the chains back to the forefront of his mind.

For a brief moment, he got the impression that he should think about something else but drinking and the temperature. But the haze in his mind made it impossible for him to follow any train of thought to the end. Exhausted he sank back against the cot and lost consciousness again.

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"What do you mean, this message is wrong?" Jack Crawford pinched the bridge of his nose, since he felt a huge head-ache coming. Will Graham was his best profiler. He was always there when he was needed. He had allowed Jack to call upon him at every ungodly hour day or night. But being called out of bed at 3:30 p.m. only to meet with said profiler in the headquarters and then hear 'the message is all wrong' did nothing to improve the senior agent's mood.

Aware of the strain he was putting on his superior, Will took a deep breath and laid out the message again. As composed and calm as he was able to, Will pointed at the words. "These are written in calligraphy. So Hannibal put a lot of thought into it and wanted it to be perfect."

"Just like his dinner invitations."

Will nodded, "Exactly," before he continued. "So if he usually takes his time to make it not only beautiful but perfect, have you ever known him to use contractions?"

Looking at the message again, creasing his brows Jack gently touched the 'don't' before shaking his head. "No, you are right. Hannibal Lecter would never do something like that. But you said yourself, the message is written in his hand, the tools came from his own table, no matter how they were aligned. How should I conduct a search with but one word as an indicator that your Omega has not simply took some time off?"

When Will growled angrily, Jack tried to placate him. "I don't say that this is what happened, but even if I believe you. There is nothing in the office that indicates forced entry. You read his journals, something I would not acknowledge officially if I were you. All of his appointments have been kept. We have virtually nothing to go on. What would you have me do?"

Deflating slightly because Will was more than aware that Jack was absolutely right, the Alpha sagged against the desk, rubbing his eyes tiredly. "I don't know Jack. All I know is that Hannibal would never, ever leave me like this. We barely keep secrets from each other. If he had been unhappy, needed a break, don't you think an Omega like Hannibal Lecter would have told me so?"

"You said that he had left his collar behind?"

"The Omega-Chain I had had made for our 6 month anniversary. Yes."

"Can I see it?"

Reluctantly Will took out the handkerchief he had wrapped the chain into and showed it to Jack.

After a brief look at the Alpha, who nodded his consent, the agent picked it up with his pen and put it into an evidence bag. "Had anybody but you or Hannibal touched this?"

After a diminuend shake of his head Will told a little hoarse, "Hannibal barely let’s anybody else see it, let alone touch it.”

"If someone but him took it off, there has to be DNA. I will test it and get back to you. Until then: go home Will. Get some sleep and maybe tomorrow you will be able to reach him through your bond. You would feel it if it is broken, so you have to have faith. Best case scenario: Hannibal is simply supressing it because he needs some space."

"And what's the worst case?"

"That someone abducted him and that he is held against his will. But if that's the case the best profiler on this continent and the entire behavioural science unit will help to get him back. We might not be able to make this official Will, but we still are your friends and we will help in any way we can."

"Thank you, Jack." Will's voice was rough with emotion and the pain of seeing his superior carrying his Omega's chain away was nearly more than he could take. But he knew that Jack was right. He had to get a few hours of sleep and then try to probe the bond again. If Hannibal wanted to be found, Will would find him. He refused to think about any other outcome.

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Hannibal was woken by deafening sound, filling every last corner of his cell. His heart was racing and he was disorientated for a moment. Terribly confused he threw himself of the cot and into a corner to hide away from the noise.

When two men stepped into his cell, canes in their hand, Hannibal's instincts flared up. He tried to kick at them, tried to defend himself but all he got was a vicious beating, until every muscle of his body was screaming.

When he did not have the strength to fight back any longer, one of them pulled a syringe from his pocket and injected him with something. It only took a few minutes for the doctor to feel the effect. The world became fuzzy once again and all he could see were blue trousers and a bright yellow shirt approaching him, gently caressing his head and whispering soothing words about learning and getting better to him.

He was dragged into another room without windows. His hands were chained in front of him to a steel-table, very much like the ones in the visiting rooms of mental institutes. He was still pondering hazily on that remarkable similarity when headphones were pushed over his ears and a soothing voice started to recite:

The Ways of the Omega:

1. Rule: The slightest whim of your Alpha is your command.
2. Rule: Regardless of personal feelings, your Alpha must be treated with respect.
3. Rule: Without being asked you have only two words to offer any conversation: Yes and Alpha.
4. Rule: An Omega must never hesitate when given an order.
5. Rule: You live only to serve your Alpha.
6. Rule: Your body and mind belongs to your Alpha.
7. Rule: Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha.
8. Rule: All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha.
9. Rule: Always remember that you are nothing more than your Alpha's property.
10. Rule: Your place is on your knees by your Alpha's side.
11. Rule: Never slack from your duties.
12. Rule: Your greatest satisfaction is knowing that you please your Alpha.

After the first repetition, the headphones were taken away from his ears and the blaring noise hurt his sensitive hearing once again. The only thing he could make out over the noise was a whispered assurance, "Everything will be fine. I will help you to please your Alpha and when you are returned to him, neither of you will lack for anything." Before the headphones were put in place again, drowning out the noise racket with the soothing voice of someone, reciting

the Ways of the Omega and though Hannibal knew them to be wrong, he couldn't help but being grateful to hear them instead of the deafening sounds that seemed surrounded him.

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The Ways of the Omega

For a few days Will had tried. Tried to stay at his Omega's mansion to be closer to Hannibal. Tried to open himself to their bond, to find a way to reach his partner in any way he could think off. But nothing helped. Their bond was fuzzy and barely there. Whenever he felt anything it was confused and nothing he could get a hold on. After the first two days Will returned to Wolfs Trap. With his dogs he felt a remote sense of comfort. Not everything around here screamed of Hannibal all the time and it helped Will to find a semblance of control, a remote chance to see what was right in front of his eyes. Will just had to find a way to think clearly, then he could deduce where Hannibal was.

Hannibal had left him messages: by using contractions in his fare-well, aligning the pencil the wrong way, things out of the ordinary Will would see. But other than cementing the knowledge that his Omega had not left him willingly, as the abandoning of the necklace suggested, these things did not help the profiler in the slightest. Not even the wine Hannibal had drunk was out of the ordinary. Sure for some people a three-hundred dollar bottle of wine would be unusual, but Will knew his Omega. When it came to the culinary pleasures of life, Hannibal had no qualms about indulging himself.

So all the empath could do was go over the interior of Hannibal's office in his mind to find another clue as well as try to reach his partner through their bond and cling on to the hope that he would receive a glimpse of where Hannibal was held. Still so far, he had had no luck.

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This was wrong, everything about this situation was wrong, the Omega was certain of that. Still, Hannibal could no longer put a finger on all the things that were incorrect. His daily routine started with being jerked awake viciously. The two men who took care of him took off his shackles, only to reattach them behind his head. Violently they shoved him into a tiled room, where he was hosed down with freezing water.

During his 'training' in the interrogation room, the Alpha came and offered his hand. Demanded from him to accept his natural position and kneel before him. But Hannibal Lecter would not, could not give in, because even through his fuzzy brain made it hard for him to think, the Omega still knew that it was wrong. He would never kneel, not before this person.

Due to his defiance the torture would continue all through the day.

Had he been chained to the table during his first week. Now he was only shoved into the corner of the room and chained with his wrists above his head. Music and noise were blasted into the room. They made his ears and his head hurt and it became harder and harder for him to think clearly.

After hours of this acoustic torture, the wrong Alpha came again. But instead of submitting to him, even though he was the only person around that didn't treat him harshly, Hannibal pushed himself on his feet, glaring as best as he could, even though he could not focus his

gaze. He would not allow this man to break him. He was neither weak nor submissive and no matter the suggestive messages they tried to condition him with, he would not give in!

Whatever they injected him twice a day, it kept him from following a clear train of thought. Once the Alpha left, the headphones shoved over his ears again and a strangely soothing voice recited the rules of the Omega. Still, Hannibal was able to contradict each and every one of them in his mind.

Rule Number 1: The slightest whim of your Alpha is your command.

No! He would never give up his integrity only to serve someone. He had better things to do, a job, … yes he had a job, an important one, even though he could not remember what right this moment.

Rule Number 2: Regardless of personal feelings, your Alpha must be treated with respect.

Respect had to be earned. He would not act respectful towards a person if said person did not deserve it. Not even his Alpha, though … had his Alpha not always has his respect?

Rule Number 3: Without being asked you have only two words to offer any conversation: Yes and Alpha.

If he attended a conversation he was supposed to say something. In the past he had … people wanted his opinion. He was sure of that.

Rule Number 4: An Omega must never hesitate when given an order.

That was … wrong. Wasn't it? He was not a dog to be ordered around …

Rule Number 5: You live only to serve your Alpha.

He had lived without an Alpha. For a long time, even though he could not remember it clearly at the moment. He had done well for himself so there was more to life than servitude! Though … serving his Alpha would be better than this …

Rule Number 6: Your body and mind belongs to your Alpha.

Hannibal Lecter, did not belong to anybody!

Rule Number 7: Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha.

He was sure that … maybe? Maybe that was not so wrong. Making people content was good. Wasn't it? Especially if the contentment would flow into the bond between an Omega and his Alpha.

Rule Number 8: All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha.

No, there were actions in his past that had displeased his Alpha. He had still stayed with him … hadn't he? His Alpha was out there. Somewhere … Was he missing Hannibal?

Rule Number 9: Always remember that you are nothing more than your Alpha's property.

No! He was … he didn't belong to anybody … he was not an animal to be chained to someone's side. Still, when he gingerly touched his neck he felt a physical pain at the absence of his collar. He couldn't recall it, but the wrong Alpha had taunted him, had mocked him of how easily he had given it up. Why had he done that? That collar had been important … had been the visible sign that he belonged to … NO!

Rule Number 10: Your place is on your knees by your Alpha's side.

He would not kneel for anybody!

Rule Number 11: Never slack from your duties.

Well, slacking always led to sloppiness and that led to rudeness and … No! These rules were wrong! He would not give in by rationalizing a single one of them!

Rule Number 12: Your greatest satisfaction is knowing that you please your Alpha.

Hannibal was not … he did not … there was something. Something akin to a dream. Where his Alpha had been happy and had made Hannibal happy in return. But then where was his Alpha? Why was he not protecting him from this torture? Did he not want Hannibal anymore? Was the wrong Alpha right and him not heeding these rules had been too much for his Alpha to put up with Hannibal any longer? Had he tried for so long, only to write Hannibal off as a lost cause in the end?

Hannibal remembered a soothing voice. Someone who had talked to him, had eased Hannibal's distress with but a few, simple words. A voice that had dampened angry impulses, calmed fury that had risen to the surface, strong feelings of comfort and tranquillity Hannibal was able to recall through the mind-numbing drugs. Every time he had felt agitated there had been this calming and comforting voice, muttering words that had made Hannibal happy.

Had he not made his Alpha happy in return? The bond was … nearly there, barely within his reach. If he could touch it just once, Hannibal was sure that he could call for his Alpha. His true Alpha would never sentence him to something like this. This was wrong and he didn't deserve it … or did he? It was so hard to think.

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Sometimes there was something: a faint glimpse, the barest there touch. Will tended to drop everything when he felt it, stopped whatever he was doing to reach for the bond with both hands, sometimes quite literally.

He had smashed a back of eggs in the supermarket. Had made himself the laughing stock of his students when he had stopped mid-sentence, turning around, twisting his hands helpless to get a grip on the bond. But always it slipped through his fingers, gone before it had really been there. The longer Hannibal was absent, the more this got to Will until tears were streaming down his eyes every time he felt the faint nudge. Realizing that no matter how much he wanted it, he could never get enough information to find the man he so desperately missed.

Several weeks had passed. Not even during his encephalitis, where Hannibal had still manipulated him, had the empath ever felt so lost. He rarely ate, barely slept, three to four hours at most. All his energy went into looking for clues for his partner. He had been in Hannibal's office twice, a dozen, a hundred times but still, nothing told him where his Omega was.

He had personally talked with each and every patient of Dr. Lecter (unofficially of course). He had convinced, coaxed or blackmailed them into cooperation. Will had had no qualms about reading Hannibal's journals to get an edge and had used this knowledge to get the information he wanted.

He realized that the bottle of wine Hannibal had drunk from, had been a present from the obnoxious Mr. Tailer. But when Will had talked to him he had felt so much honest concern from the man, a serious worry about his and Hannibal's relationship, that he had ruled him out as perpetrator, as much as every other patient he had talked to. Whenever confronted with his radical believes, the other Alpha had merely redirected Will's attention to his school, where he was helping Omega's to 'give in to their biologic urges' as he called it. He wanted to help and Will had sensed no deceit in his words.

When Will talked to some of the Alpha's students, naturally following this lead, he discovered that nearly all of them had only had praise for Mr. Tailer's school. It confused Will

to no end that all of these people so easily gave in to their biology, showed themselves submissive, even subservient and still were happy about it.

But on the other hand, who was he to judge? He was not prime Alpha material himself. To each his own way, he decided and tried to think of another lead to pursue. Unfortunately, he couldn't think of one.

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Hunger and Pain

While Will twisted and turned helplessly in pursuit for his partner, beating himself up for his inability to find his Omega, Hannibal's fate turned from bad to worst. It all started with the abandonment of his morning-injection.

For now he had endured torture, being mocked by the goons that man-handled him every day and being verbally spat on with mockingly kind words of the wrong Alpha. He had long since realized that it was the infamous Mr. Tailer, who was in charge of his 'education'.

Only a small part of Hannibal's mind, that was able to muster a sane thought now and then, realized what was happening to him. He was drugged – constantly, beaten – regularly, and the Alpha was the only one who ever spoke kindly to him. The only one, who touched him with gentleness. He was supposed to give in, accept his inferior position and obey the rules.

But Hannibal was determined not to do so. True he had started to cherish hearing the soft voice on tape that sounded so very much like his own Alpha. Because even though the words were wrong (he knew that, wanted to be sure of that, reminded himself of it regularly) the soothing tone was like a light in the darkness. A single flame that held the monsters at bay that tried to invade his mind. Gradually the dosage of drugs lessened and he was able to think more and more clearly.

That earned the men who handled him several bite-wounds and a splayed ankle and him the worst beating ever since his abduction. But he would not be pliant, would not role over because he saw no way out at the moment. The only thing that ate away his resolve was the inactive bond to his own Alpha. He still got an injection in the evening and all his hope lingered on the thought, that this drug might dampen his bond and that it had not been Will's conscious choice to leave him here.

Still it got harder and harder every day. He dreamed about the accursed rules and though he still was able to resist the wrong Alpha, he accepted more and more of how wrong his own behaviour had been. Will had been so lenient, had allowed him every freedom he had wanted and when he had once put his foot down, Hannibal had ignored his wishes. Being trapped here was the direct result of that ignorance and Hannibal started to accept it as a suitable punishment.

The Omega wished so very much that he could talk to his Alpha. He knew his shortcomings, had been confronted with them repeatedly ever since coming here. But Will had always told him that they didn't matter, had not even viewed Hannibal’s defiance as a shortcoming of his Omega.

Maybe Hannibal had allowed himself to bask in a wrong sense of security. Maybe Will was like every other Alpha, who allowed his Omega some leniency – even more than most – in exchange for extraordinary behaviour. Once out of this hell, the Omega was determined make it up to him. He could prove his Alpha that he was worth the aggravations his independent behaviour might have caused Will. If only he got the chance.

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Usually Hannibal got a rather opulent meal at the end of each day, right before all lights went out and he was forced to sleep in a dark cell, chained to the wall like an animal. But for the last two days he had received neither water, nor food. His lips were cracked and he felt dizzy. So when soothing droplets of water touched his lips he latched onto them, licked over them and tried to get closer to the source. After having drunk his fill, he opened his eyes.

Instantly he distanced himself from the Alpha who had held a water-bottle to his lips. Though Hannibal had been desperately thirsty, he felt disgusted with himself for taking something from the man who had kidnapped him. Things only got worse when the Alpha pulled a tray into his lap and lifted the hood. The smell of freshly scrambled eggs, a buttery croissant and plum, red strawberries assaulted his nose.

Pulling off a piece from the pastry he offered it to Hannibal. Smiling gently he coaxed the Omega, "Come here, kneel and I will feed you the entire meal."

His body wanted to follow the command, Hannibal felt himself surging forward, sink down, but he locked his legs in the very last second. "I will never kneel before you! You are *not* my Alpha!" The Omega spat at the other man. Even though his stomach grumbled loudly he stared at the Alpha defiantly. "I would rather die of starvation than take something from your hand!"

"Really?" The Alpha rose, taking the deliciously smelling meal with him and Hannibal supressed a desperate whimper when the food was taken away. But he would not give in, not to this man. He had no right over him, he had an Alpha and he would kneel for nobody but him!

"Well, let's see if you will be so defiant in a week."

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It was torture, pure and undeluded torment. The Alpha made it a regular occurrence to eat beside Hannibal once the Omega had been brought to his 'education-room'. For god knew how long, Hannibal had seen light of day only through the small window in his cell and for about a week he had not eaten anything. True he was chained down at night and got a painful infusion that was supposed to keep him alive and during the day he was given watered down juice that kept up his energy. But for the promised week he had not received a single bite of food.

Now the Alpha took a piece of meat from his plate. It was seared to perfection, crispy brown on the outside and juicy on the inside. Hannibal's weak stomach twisted into knots at the smell. He wanted this food. He wanted it with his entire being. Without his consent he crouched closer, the chain around his neck allowed him that much slack, but halfway through the room he realized what he was doing and shifted back into the corner, resolutely shaking his head. His voice was hoarse and he clutched his own chain to hold himself back. "I will not eat from your hand like a dog. I am not an animal."

Taking the piece of meat for himself, visibly savouring it, Mr. Tailer shook his head. "No you are not. You are a particularly resilient Omega, but I think I finally understand the problem. Sadly there is nothing I can do for you anymore."

And with that the Alpha rose and left Hannibal to his own devices. For the first time ever since his abduction there was no deafening noise, no soothing words in his ears and horrified the Omega realized that he missed them. Closing his eyes he started to replay them in his own head. The voice that had recited them was slightly wrong, but Hannibal's brilliant mind had no trouble rectifying that error.

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When Mr. Tailer knocked at the door to Hannibal Lecter's mansion, Will answered, slightly surprise. Today was one of the rare days when he was here. To sort through Hannibal's mail and keep his partner's affairs in order, or just to linger in the familiar environment. Usually, after finishing his lectures at the academy he returned to Wolfs Trap.

Jack had not called upon him ever since Hannibal's abduction. But if that meant that there were no killings, or that he wanted to give Will some room, the profiler did not know. Nor did he particularly care at the moment, if he was honest with himself. He doubted that he would have been of much use to Jack Crawford anyway. He spent countless hours each day to get into the head of his own Omega, so he had no capacity to spare for the criminally insane.

Now, when the other Alpha asked if he could come in, Will granted the request, working more or less on auto pilot. The revelation the man had to offer however, left him speechless. Without further delay Hannibal's former patient asked, "Would you like to get your Omega back? I have done everything I can do for the two of you. The rest is up to you."

"What?" Will's breathless question did not even seem to faze his guest. Composedly he revealed that at college he had found most relationships between Alphas and Omegas severely lacking – hence his school for Omegas – mostly because members of the two designations were not listening to their instincts. Since the behavioural pattern of Alpha's was impossible to change, Mr. Tailer had concentrated on the Omegas.

During college and all through university, he had worked on a program, a combination of drugs and reinforcements (both positive and negative as he explained) to change the behavioural pattern of the weaker partner, to match the likings of his Alpha.

He held back nothing, described in detail what he had done to Hannibal Lecter, not seeing the agitation that started to overwhelm Will, since the Alpha was all calm and composed on the outside.

"If you wish, I could give you a ride. My car is right outside." The Alpha offered with a pleasant smile.

"Thank you very much, I truly appreciate both the offer and your honesty." Will shook his head. "But there are things I have to do before I can retrieve my Omega. If you could give me

the address, I will pick him up today."

With a calm smile that nearly reach his eyes Will mounted his own car an hour later. He would get his Omega back. He briefly thought about calling Jack, but after everything this sick, weirdo had told him, Will was not sure that Hannibal was not in danger still. He decided to deal with this by himself. It allowed him more freedom in his actions than merely standing on the side line, watching the FBI do their work. The car of the other Alpha was already gone.

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Successful Education

When reaching the address, Will slowed when passing the school. The panel above the main entrance with the words ~Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve~, made dread pooling in his stomach just like the first time he had been here to question the students. Mr. Tailer had asked him to use the back-door, since Will alone around not fully trained Omega's might cause some commotion. The educational institute was supposed to provide a safe environment for learning. Since Will did not want to draw more attention to himself than necessary, he passed by and drove around the block to reach the back-door.

Upon knocking he was invited in by a tall man with dark hair that gave of an unsettling vibe. When Will informed him that Mr. Tailer had directed him to retrieve his Omega, the guy chuckled and fist-bumped his colleague who had just approached the door. "The Alpha wants to claim back his puppy. Why don't you show him the way while I lock up?"

Looking at Will, he smirked, "Don't worry Alpha, your little pet will be far more obedient now. I realize that you might not be a friend of using a heavy hand on your Omega, but this one had surely needed it."

The second man invited Will to follow him and continued the conversation, ignoring that Will remained silent. "Ever since we cut the drugs he bit me. Twice! See." Showing his arm the man sighed. "But you should not have a problem with him any more. Defiant little shit that one, but Alpha Tailer surely broke him."

Will very much wanted to strangle this man with his bare hands. But for now finding his Omega was his top priority, so he answered in non-committal noises, ignoring the other as best as he could. The man guided Will into the cellar. He opened a heavy door in a storage room and revealed a corridor with three doors. The cell, the classroom and the sanitary facilities, as he explained, while pointing at them.

Then, he opened the first door to the left and a part of Will dreaded to pass through and see what lay behind it.

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Ever since the wrong Alpha's disappearance yesterday, Hannibal had waited for the inevitable. Surely by now he had proven too stubborn to be taught, so they had no further use for him. The soup and white rice with ginger sauce, they had shoved into his cell in the evening had confused him, why should they feed him all of a sudden? But when nobody had claimed them back or tried to humiliate him, he had drunk the soup greedily and had used all of his remaining restrain not to gorge down the rice. Instead he had taken small bites as to not upset his stomach.

Despite his precautions he had gotten cramps, but he had breathed through them and after an hour he had finally been able to sleep, satisfied for the first time in a week. In the morning there had been tea and a blunt roll. Not exactly the most satisfying last meal, but who was

Hannibal to judge? The tea had been sweetened heavily and afterwards the Omega had wished for a glass of water, but he had to count his blessings having received something at all. So he had remained pliant and had not fought his captors when they had dragged him out of the cell.

He had endured the inevitable cleaning procedure, wondering briefly why they were going through so much trouble, if they planned to dispose of him anyway. Once brought to the room with the steel-table, he was pushed into the chair and his mind inevitably fleeing back to the rules. The fact that he had not been chained did not even register in his mind. At least not until the door opened and his Alpha stood in the doorway.

Will and Hannibal just stared at each other. Will taking in the worn and beaten figure, looking up at him. Hannibal the glorious form of his Alpha, unsure if he could believe his eyes or if his tea had been spiked. But if this was a hallucination, the Omega didn't want it to stop.

The Omega had hoped for this, dreamed of this for such a long time. He had always known … always hoped … desperately wished, for his Alpha to come and get him. But now that the man was here, he was not sure what to do, what was expected of him so that Will would stay.

It was in that very moment, on the brink of Will saying the first words to him, that Hannibal finally understood what these last weeks had been all about.

The realization crashed down on him like a tidal wave, threatened to drown him, and all he could do was swallow heavily around his constricting throat, waiting for his Alpha to say something. Because whatever Will would say now, Hannibal knew without the shadow of doubt that he would obey, would accept the words as absolute truth.

He had used all of his strength, his entire resistance to fight Tailer, because he had been the wrong Alpha. But now *his* Alpha stood before him, if he would order him to kneel, Hannibal would sink to the floor in a heartbeat, because against Will, he had no defences.

He equally dreaded and longed for the first command, but Will – always knowing, always understanding – only reached out for him and invited quietly, "Come."

Without hesitation Hannibal rose and approached his partner, sank into open arms, clutching onto the fabric of the soft flannel shirt, trembling all over. Only now did he realize that Will felt wrong in his arms, he was strong, an overwhelming presence but his body felt far too thin.

The doctor wanted to look at him, to judge his Alpha's condition, but he could not let go. His arms simply refused to unwind from his partner and for the longest time the two of them just stood there, revelling in the comfort of being able to touch again.

~ Your body and mind belong to your Alpha. ~

Their bond flared up minutely. Hannibal had always suspected that the drug had tampered it down and it still lingered in his system, but despite the crippled bond he revelled in being back in his Alpha’s arms.

He only registered the mocking words of one of his tormentors, that Will should make good use of his freshly trained Omega by giving a proper order, when Will caressed Hannibal's head and whispered, looking into Hannibal’s eyes. "You are absolutely right."

When Hannibal pulled back to find out what his partner would demand, dreading what kind of 'use' Will would find for him, he felt something hard and heavy in his hand. He tried to look down, but Will still held his head, preventing the movement.

Gazing into his Alpha's eyes Hannibal saw no compassion, no leniency only darkness and anger. When Will pulled his right hand back, Hannibal was able to identify the item he had been given. The familiar weight of his hunting knife comforted him. A crude but effective weapon and with Will's final command all anxiety and insecurity left Hannibal.

The velvet voice of his Alpha caressed his ears, his mind, his very soul when he ordered, "Do, what you do best." Before Will stepped back and allowed him free reign.

Confused by the mysterious command, the other man made the mistake of turning towards his former prisoner and his Alpha, giving up the tiniest chance of getting out of this unharmed.

~ An Omega must never hesitate when given an order. ~

Without hesitation the Omega sank the blade deep into the man's stomach, twisting it until his victim screamed just like they had made him scream during the beatings. The memories of the suffered abuse rose to the surface and within a heartbeat, Hannibal lost the last of his composure. He pulled back the blade and embedded it into the other man's lungs, pulling it

back and punctuating the hand his opponent had raised defensively. With all the strength he had left Hannibal butchered this man with no finesse but a lot of rage.

He did not realize the blood he was spreading over himself and the floor. He did not hear the footsteps of the second man who had aided in his torture.

The other had been drawn to the cellar by the screams of anguish from his counterpart.

Only the gunshot, fired not one foot beside him, echoing from the walls brought Hannibal back to his mind. Just in time to see his other tormentor breaking down to the floor with one, clean hole in his forehead. When the Omega followed the trajectory of the bullet, he saw his Alpha standing next to him protectively, his gun still smoking.

Putting away his weapon Will looked down at Hannibal, who was on his knees beside him, looking up at him reverently. Will gently carded his fingers through his partner's blood-speckled hair, radiating content. "Are you finished, my love?"

~ Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha. ~

Leaning into the gentle gesture, closing his eyes to savour it, Hannibal looked down at the butchered corpse for a moment, before he looked up at Will. "I … destroyed the meat …"

~ All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha. ~

Will crouched down next to him, gently brushing the droplets of blood from his face and kissed him most tenderly. Putting their foreheads together, the Alpha whispered, "That's not meat, Hannibal, that's waste. I would never allow it on your table."

Rising, he offered his hand once again. "Come on, let's go."

Unwilling and unable to resist his Alpha’s prompting, Hannibal let Will guide him upstairs and nudge him into a room full of shower stalls. After a brief kiss to the forehead, Will told Hannibal to clean himself and that he would return soon.

The Omega felt a very familiar feeling of dread pool in his stomach after Will closed the door.

Was his Alpha displeased with him? Did Will want to leave without him? Surely he cared for him, otherwise he would not have helped killing his tormentors. But after everything that had happened Hannibal felt broken. What good would he do to an Alpha as weak as he was?

Unsure of what to do, the doctor rid himself of his clothes and tentatively approached one of the shower stalls. At first he only opened only the cold tab, but after shivering under the spray for a few moments, he realized that he was alone and could risk raising the temperature. Gazing briefly towards the door, he added hot water. After a few moments the shower was filling with steam and Hannibal stood under the hot spray with closed eyes. The long missed feeling of ecstasy for obeying his true Alpha wash over him so strongly that Hannibal's legs nearly buckled. If there were tears of gratitude streaming over his cheeks nobody would ever know, since the steaming water carried them away.

After god knew how long, the Omega turned off the water and reached for the paper towels beside the sink to dry himself. He didn't want to put on his bloody clothes again. A little lost he kneeled on the tiled floor, looking at his hands, waiting for his Alpha.

~ Your place is on your knees by your Alpha's side. ~

When Will entered again, he offered a pair of sweat-pants, smelling of laundry detergent but obviously well used since they were a little frayed at the edges. Without commenting on being given passed on clothes, Hannibal put them on. They were better than being naked anyway. The next item, the Omega did not mind being worn before. Will had shrugged off his oversized flannel shirt and after all the torment Hannibal had suffered, it hung a little loose even on his wider frame. But feeling the warmth, and inhaling the scent of his Alpha, Hannibal calmed considerably.

Once the Omega was properly clothed, Will laced their fingers and guided Hannibal away from his place. When they reached Will's beat up car, the Alpha held open the door to the passenger's seat. Only then did Hannibal notice the wound on his Alpha's hand. He pulled the scratched hand closer, a distressed whimper rose from the back of his throat.

But Will only kissed him gently and started the car. Allowing Hannibal to keep his injured hand he looked back at the house before smiling at his Omega. "Come on, let us get you home."

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Rules

"Are you hungry, Hannibal? I can prepare something to eat."

~ Never slack from your duties. ~

"I can … I should be the one preparing the meal …"

Will was well aware, that something was distinctively not right with his partner. A part of him wanted to strangle Tailer for it, for changing Hannibal into something that was less than his forceful, determined self. But he knew, that this man should not be his top priority right now. Hannibal needed him, had clutched his scratched hand for the entire ride home. He had avoided Will's eyes, had only, tentatively caressed the skin around his Alpha's wound. Will had not even paid attention to the scab he had suffered, when dragging the second body into the interrogation room and closing the door behind himself.

Hannibal was swaying on his feet, exhausted, starved and barely strong enough to hold himself up. Still he tried to approach the kitchen because Will had talked about food. Confused why his Omega was overtaxing himself, the empath followed and watched Hannibal looking at his more or less empty fridge, shivering from distress.

When Will put his hands on his partner's shoulders the Omega flinched and mumbled upset, "Never slack from your duties. There is nothing to eat, I can't … I have to go shopping. I can't prepare a suitable meal with so little. I …"

Confused, Will stirred Hannibal away from the fridge and nudged him to sit in the chair his Omega had placed in the kitchen on his behalf more than two years ago. Kneeling in front of Hannibal, he reached for his partner's hands when he showed signs of increasing agitation. As calmly as he was able to, Will spoke quietly, "I can prepare the meal Hannibal. There is enough food left, you don’t have to worry. But before that, I would like to know what you are talking about."

"Yes, Alpha."

Gently nudging his Omega's chin, so that he was looking at him, Will ordered, since gentle probing seemed to get him nowhere. "Tell me what you are worried about, Hannibal."

"The rules," the Omega whispered. "I cannot heed them. I know them, they taught me, but they were wrong. I could not follow them with the wrong Alpha. But you are the right one. I am yours and I want to please you."

“What rules?” Taking a deep breath, dreading what he would hear, Will still demanded, "Tell me the rules, Hannibal."

The Omega did not hesitate for a second before reciting, "The Ways of the Omega. Rule Number 1: The slightest whim of your Alpha is your command. Rule Number 2: Regardless of personal feelings, your Alpha must be treated with respect. Rule Number 3: Without being asked you have only two words to offer any conversation: Yes and Alpha. Rule Number 4: An Omega must never hesitate when given an order. Rule Number 5: You live only to serve your Alpha. Rule Number 6: Your body and mind belong to your Alpha. Rule Number 7: Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha. Rule Number 8: All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha. Rule Number 9: Always remember that you are nothing more than your Alpha's property. Rule Number 10: Your place is on your knees by your Alpha's side. Rule Number 11: Never slack from your duties. Rule Number 12: Your greatest satisfaction is knowing that you please your Alpha."

Will's vicious growl made Hannibal curl into himself, since Will did not allow him enough room to sink to his knees before him.

~ Regardless of personal feelings, your Alpha must be treated with respect. ~

"I am sorry. Please don't be angry. Tell me what I should do, I want to please you …" Hannibal started, in a frantic whisper, pulling at his own hair. But his Alpha's gentle hands on his fingers stopped him. Hannibal was well aware that he was messing up, but he did not what his Alpha was expecting of him. Tailer had always taunted him, had played him with suggestions he had not been able to follow. But Will had given him but one order until now. Not enough to estimate his wishes. Brokenly he breathed, leaning into Will’s arms that were close to his face. Touching his Alpha again, being touched by him felt oh so good. Better than he deserved right now. "I just want to make you happy."

Pulling his Omega into his lap, enveloping him in a comforting hug, Will felt his partner's hot tears drenching his undershirt. This was too much, far too much for him to deal with. He was no doctor, no psychiatrist. He was a profiler for heaven’s sake and a teacher of criminal behaviour at the FBI academy. How was he supposed to deal with a brain-washed Omega?

Gently carding his fingers through his partner's hair, Will asked gently, "Did they give you any kind of drugs? Can you remember that?" He did not doubt, that his strong, determined Omega would only carve under such ludicrous rules, if his mind had been seriously impaired. Will knew Hannibal, knew the very best and very worst of him. Therefore the Alpha was well aware, that his Omega would detest himself for even considering, to let his behaviour be guided by such humiliating guidelines.

Timidly the Omega nodded against his shoulder. Quietly he shared, "In the morning and in the evening. It was so hard to think in the beginning, but in the end, when they stopped

drugging me in the morning, I knew that it would end. I knew that the voice that taught me the rules was wrong. It was calm and gentle but it was not yours. I could not obey it. I could not obey the wrong Alpha either. I am yours. My mind and body belongs to you and I wanted you to come for me.

"In the evening they gave me something that supressed our bond. Every day, but yesterday." Pulling back slightly, Hannibal looked at Will, searching for something before he asked. "That's what they did, right? It was the drug that blocked our connection, right? It was … not you …"

"Oh my god, Hannibal." Hugging his partner fiercely, Will peppered kisses over his Omega's head, forehead, eyes, cheeks and finally his lips. "Never, not for a single second have I thought about impeding our connection. I looked for you every single day of the last months. Here. In your office. I have interrogated your patients, your receptionist, everybody who had ever come in contact with you for the last year. At night I have concentrated on our bond. I tried to reach you, every single day. I would never, ever try to distance myself from you. I swear, Hannibal. Never!"

"I knew it." Hannibal slumped boneless into his Alpha’s embrace and instantly Will pulled him closer. The Omega buried his face in Will's neck, sobbing quietly. He had not believed it, not really. Since the connection had been lost nothing had indicated his Alpha to be there. To be looking for him, caring for him in the slightest. He had been so unbearably lonely and hearing that Will had done everything to find him soothed an ache, he had not even been aware off.

After a little while, Will pulled back and kissed him again. "Now I will prepare some sandwiches, we can eat and then we can go to bed. Alright?"

"But providing the meals is my duty." Hannibal protested, only to be kissed by his Alpha again.

Will hated himself for his next words, despised himself for using this way. But for now, he had no other idea of how to convince Hannibal but by playing by these horrible rules. The last thing he wanted was to upset his Omega further. Something that clearly happened when the older man sensed that he was disobeying the imperatives he had been conditioned with.

Hannibal needed time and peace to heal, so the Alpha whispered, "As is obeying my orders." After taking a deep breath, Will continued, "I am content to provide for you tonight. Alright?"

~ Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha. ~

Smiling a little, Hannibal scooted back into the chair and wrapped his arms around his drawn up legs, looking at Will who made himself at home in Hannibal’s kitchen.

His Alpha had told the truth, the bond between them barely there, but the Omega could see in every movement, in every smile his Alpha granted him that Will truly was happy to prepare this meal. He expected nothing from his Omega but for Hannibal to sitting there and watch him. So the Omega allowed Will’s contentment to wash over him and relaxed into the cushions.

When he felt a gentle hand on his shoulder, waking him from his doze, Hannibal's first instinct was to slide to his knees before Will, but the Alpha seemed prepared for the motion and pulled him to his feet, the same moment he slid from the armchair.

Will guided the both of them to the bedroom and placed the tray on the small table in front of the fireplace and relaxed into one of the chair. Aware of Hannibal's hesitation, he opened his legs and the Omega sank to the floor between them, grateful that he was allowed to remain in contact with his Alpha.

He was provided with half a sandwich and a cup of soup and sipped it while rubbing his cheek against his Alpha's tight. This felt familiar, safe and Hannibal smiled up at Will for a moment, when the Alpha offered another sandwich. Without opening it, Hannibal knew, "Peanut-butter and Jelly."

Smiling down at his partner, who now sat relaxed between his legs, Will chuckled. "Well, it seemed fitting, don’t you think?"

Mirroring his Alpha's smile, Hannibal savoured every bite, trying to recall the first time Will had treated him with such a meal. The memories were fuzzy but he could remember the feeling of complete and utter safety and with these pleasant thoughts he dozed off. He barely registered Will stirring him to the bed, but when the duvet covered the both of them, Hannibal snuggled deeper into Will's embrace and succumbed to a deep and restful sleep.

♔♙|♟♚

Questions

For a few days, Will barely left the house concentrating on taking care of Hannibal. He had Alana bring over Winston and his small Spaniel Coco. They were the last dogs he had not found a new home for. Though for Winston he had not even tried. He had found Coco in a dirty box next to the dumpsters close to the academy. The little whelp had been half starved and barely conscious. He had taken care of her. Had fed her, taken her to the vet, and though she hadn't grown a lot, still small and weak from the abuse she had suffered as a pup, she was the cutest and cuddliest dog he had ever had and Winston was insanely protective of her.

Upon entering the mansion, Winston had instantly approached Hannibal, licked his hands and curling up beside him. No matter what the Omega did: sleeping, cleaning or cooking, the half breed stayed as close as possible, soothing him when he felt Hannibal's mind descending to a dark place. Will was grateful for this, since he had to return to the academy, four days after Hannibal's return. Coco remained by his side, silent and well-mannered throughout the seminars since he did not wanted to burden Hannibal with two dogs.

When Will returned home after his second day of work, he felt instantly concerned when spotting Jack Crawford's car in the driveway of the mansion. The Alpha had not felt any distress through their bond, but they were still working on unveiling its full potential again. Apparently the drugs still lingered in his Omega’s system. Upon entering the house, Coco instantly dashed towards the living-room, telling Will that Winston would be there. And if the dog was there, Hannibal was not far.

Following his dog, when entering the living room Will felt for half a second as if the last few months had not happened.

Hannibal sat relaxed, in an armchair, sipping a glass of wine. Jack beside him on the couch, a half empty glass of red wine in front of him. Still, when Will entered, gently touching his Omega's neck in a loving caress, he could feel Hannibal’s tension. He didn't let himself be fooled by the doctor’s non-chelate tone when he looked up at him. "I was just telling Jack about my return here five days ago. How lucky I was that you were here because I was barely lucid."

Provided with a very basic overview of the lie Hannibal had come up with for Jack, Will wished feverishly to be able to dip into Hannibal's thoughts, to be able to play along more easily. But still the only thing he sensed was Hannibal's need for him to stay close, to not be alone. So he relaxed against the armrest of Hannibal's chair and nodded. "I only went over your mail every two to three days. It was pure coincident for me to be here. I guess we just were lucky."

"What time was it when Dr. Lecter came here?" Jack asked.

Alright, so this was official since it was 'Dr. Lecter' and not 'Hannibal'. Shrugging Will shared a look with his Omega before they both answered in unison, "After sundown, it was already dark." – "Evening, around nine I guess?"

Both knew that a good lie contained nine-tenths truth and it had been around nine when the two of them had entered the house that evening.

Apparently placated but not entirely convinced by their similar answers, "And you can't remember anything that had happened before?"

With a slight frown, as if inconvenienced by his own inability to remember, Hannibal shook his head. "I was drugged, I remember the fuzzy feeling. I recall fragments, people hurting me, being … being …"

When the doctor stopped, Jack reached out to his friend and put a hand on the shaking fingers of the Omega. Will wanted to growl, to shove the other Alpha away, but restrained himself. They needed Jack on their side right now.

Calmly the other Alpha tried to sooth his friend. "I understand that this is difficult for you, Hannibal. But something has happened and I need you to tell me every single thing you can remember? I waited to question you because Will asked for it, but now I need to know."

"I was afraid." Hannibal whispered. Reaching for Will's hand they intertwined their fingers before the Omega repeated. "I remember being hurt, very much so and being frightened. But aside from that nothing else. It was dark, most of the time and it was cold. Really, terribly cold."

Calming his Omega, who was only partially acting, Will asked his superior. "What has happened, Jack? Why are you here, now of all times?" The fact that Hannibal was not well again remained unmentioned and Jack Crawford had the decency to look at least a little contrite, before he pulled out pictures of a very familiar crime-scene.

"Two people were found in the cellar of an educational institute not five miles from here. We found clothes, your clothes Dr. Lecter, in the shower of the building. There were three types of blood on them, yours – heavily laced with an unknown drug cocktail and that of these two. It places you at the crime scene, as do lab reports of a cell, a shower-stall and toilet in the same cellar.

"Searching the files from the main office we found a hidden compartment that contained your file and that of two other Omegas. The pictures in it were … well, let's say your supposed reaction is completely understandable. Still, we have to look into this."

Redirecting his attention from the Omega to the Alpha who still hovered protectively by his side, Jack asked, "I hope that you will allow him to be questioned, Will. We need every piece of information that we can get. Because he is the only Omega in these files who survived."

"What if I decline?" Will asked, since he had never looked into the full extent of rights an Alpha could execute over his bonded Omega.

Sighing tiredly, draining his glass, Jack rose. "In that case we can't do anything. As Hannibal's legal Alpha he is your responsibility regarding the law. We have come a great way about equality in the last decade, but if you decline my official request, and Hannibal makes

no attempts to contradict you, we can’t do anything. But please, Will. You want this bastard who did this to Hannibal to be found and punished as well, don’t you?"

"Always remember that you are nothing more than your Alpha's property." Hannibal whispered under his breath, closing his eyes, closing his hand around Will's fingers painfully.

Rising to his feet, Jack looked into Will's eyes, who concentrated at his partner concern evident in his eyes. "The one who did this is a monster, Will. Not one who kills for his own, sick pleasure. One who has lost his grip on reality. Who destroys the lives of others because of his own, twisted view of the world. We need Hannibal's help to identify him, to find him and put an end to his schemes. I will grant your Omega full immunity for his actions since he was clearly not in his right mind – in the aftermath of torture – when he committed them. But I need him. I need his help. Please take that into consideration."

When Will nodded affirmative, Jack prepared to see himself out, imploring one last time. "This time we can make a change before the corpses show up. I know this is personal but I hope you will be able to see the bigger picture."

"I will try my best, Jack. Thank you for coming here."

When the agent left, Will took a shuddering breath. He was grateful since he was very well aware that Jack could have brought Hannibal in for questioning. His Omega would not have stood up from himself and denied that request today. He wondered briefly if they had found evidence of him being there. He had been careful to wipe away his prints, but since the agent had not mentioned anything, he wanted to count this as a blessings.

Turning towards his partner, Will nudged Hannibal gently. "How are you?"

"Tailer is still out there. I don't want him to take another and sentence him to what I have been through." Hannibal stated quietly, looking up at Will when his Alpha promised, "That will not happen again. But we will do everything in our power to close this 'school', I promise."

And with that, they left the topic behind in favour of relocating to the kitchen so that Hannibal could finish the preparations for dinner, Jack had interrupted a little while ago.

♔♙|♟♚

Ironically it was that night that their bond flared back to life in full force. Will, always the light sleeper, shot up from the bed, reaching for the gun he had on his bedside table ever since Hannibal’s abduction.

Keeping his weapon by his side, loaded and ready was something he rarely did. But after everything that had happened, Will felt that his Omega needed extra protection. So he was

half out of bed, with a loaded weapon in hand, when he realized that the overwhelming distress he had woken to was not his own.

Carefully putting away the gun he turned towards his Omega who lay in bed, huddled into himself to present the smallest possible target. He did not whimper, nor did he give any other indication of being in distress. He was just dead scared, still trapped in his own mind.

Aware that he was the only one who could help, Will put down the gun and entered the bathroom to wash his face and calm his mind. When looking into the mirror he realized that he looked barely better than a week days ago. This situation was demanding a lot, both from Hannibal and his Alpha.

It had been a long time since his mind had played tricks on him. Still he remembered far too vividly what the encephalitis had done to his brain. He had felt trapped, distressed, confused, but in the end, with Hannibal's help, he had triumphed over the illness and had been able to pick up his duties once again.

Now the situation was mirrored. But the bond would work in his favour. Hannibal had only been able to talk to him, to use words and gestures to help him in his recovery. Will could access his Omega's mind, that made it easier to help but also much more dangerous because influencing another person's mind could cause all sorts of damage. Hannibal's psyche was fragile as it was, Will didn't want to weaken it further.

After taking a steeling breath, Will left the bathroom and sat down on the bed beside his partner. Tenderly he reached for Hannibal's shoulder and put his hand there. Then he sank into the depth of his partner's mind.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Chains

When Will opened his eyes, taking in the usually so familiar surroundings of his partner's mind, he was not surprised to find himself in the room he had retrieved his partner from, five days ago. Hannibal sat huddled in a corner, chained to the wall with headphones covering his ears. There was a deafening noise surrounding them and Will had to fight down the impulse to cover his ears.

He saw the other Alpha, Mr. Tailer in his canary-yellow shirt and light-blue trousers, sitting at the table, offering Hannibal a morsel of food, holding it above the floor like Will would do when feeding his dogs. But Hannibal clutched the headphones closer to his ears and shook his head frantically.

Stepping between the two, Will crouched down before his Omega and covered Hannibal's hands with his own. When his Omega looked up, he let go of the headphones and wrapped his arms around Will's waist, burying his face in his Alpha's stomach. Gently taking the headphones away, Hannibal made a distressed sound, but Will only whispered, "Make the noise go away."

Hannibal was anxiously reciting, "The slightest whim of your Alpha is your command. Regardless of personal feelings, your Alpha must be treated with respect. Without being asked you have only two words to offer any conversation: Yes and Alpha. An Omega must never hesitate when given an order. You live only to serve your Alpha. Your body and mind belong to your Alpha. Your contentment lies in the contentment of your Alpha. All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha. Always remember that you are nothing more than your Alpha's property. Your place is on your knees by your Alpha's side. Never slack from your duties. Your greatest satisfaction is knowing that you please your Alpha."

When finally looking up at Will, the Omega whispered, "Would silence please you?"

Forcing a smile on his face, Will nodded. "Greatly."

The next instant the noise was gone. Turning towards the other Alpha Will nudged Hannibal into an upright position. "Him as well."

Confused Hannibal shook his head. "But I can't. He is always there, telling me what a disappointment I am, showing me my mistakes, helping me to overcome them."

Clenching his teeth, praying for composure, Will whispered into Hannibal's ear. "Isn't that my job?"

Looking at his Alpha worriedly, the Omega nodded timidly before the other Alpha vanished as well.

Aware that a part of Hannibal's mind was still trapped in this hell-hole, Will went for the door, offering Hannibal his hand so that the Omega would accompany him. The chains

binding him to the corner had vanished along with Tailer. But the Omega shook his head frantically. “I can’t. There is danger out there, darkness and violence. I can’t deal with that, it is wrong.”

Shaking his head, Will gently caressed his partner’s face. “There is nothing out there you need to be afraid of. It’s all you. You are having a nightmare, are you not aware of that? We are home, both safe and sound in our bed. This is just your mind playing tricks on you.”

Looking around, at the room, the table, the seat that had been occupied just moments ago, the chains that had constricted his throat, Hannibal nodded solemnly. “And now you want me to wake up.” Half a statement, half a question, but apparently Hannibal would still take his cues from Will. Whatever the Alpha decided would happen, even here where Hannibal held all the power.

Aware that his partner had to face his nightmares Will shook his head. “No, my love. I want you to follow me and face your true nature. I am not afraid of being here. So why should you?”

“Because I am yours, and everything that happens, happens on your command. You are my Alpha, I belong to you and I would never hurt you. But I have had nightmares ever since this started. I am not safe here.”

Gently caressing his Omega’s face, Will assured him, “With me by your side you are always safe. I am the one invading peoples’ minds for living, I am good with this. Come on, let me show you.”

Reluctantly Hannibal followed and the first few steps out of the door, Will found the two of them surrounded by night. But the Alpha was not afraid of the darkness, not any more. Hannibal had proven his instincts to be true to his nature, when Will had offered a weapon in this cellar and with but a gentle suggestion, the Omega had put it to good use. So the Chesapeake Ripper had to be somewhere. They only had to find him.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The Ripper, the Ravenstag in both Will and Hannibal’s mind, had always been this amazing, mythical creature, enteral and unique, strong and unrelenting. If they could find the core of Hannibal’s strength, they could start the healing process. But without any direction, Will simply put one foot in front of the other, sure that his partner’s soul would not allow to be trapped forever.

Darkness turned to grey twilight, and twilight turned into the most beautiful sunrise. Before Will knew it the two of them stood in a wide meadow. Aware how similar this was to his place in the stream, the Alpha smiled at his Omega, only to find him behind his right shoulder, tears streaming from his eyes.

When Will followed his line of sight, he found the majestic beast, the Ravenstag chained to the ground. Held down with weird, golden bindings that allowed him to buckle but never to

move. Approaching the stag, Will kneeled beside his head and gently caressed its muzzle. Turning towards his Omega, Will asked gently, “Is that what you want Hannibal? This magnificent beast chained down and rendered useless?”

Coming closer, inspecting the animal that seemed both so very familiar and so very strange, Hannibal circled it uncertain.

“This is where the darkness comes from.” He pondered. Spreading his arms he asked, “If this is where I can be without it, why would I want to free it?”

Reaching for his Omega’s hand, Hannibal relented reluctantly, and sank to his knees beside Will. “This is a dead place, my love. There are no birds, or bees, no animals that I can hear of. You conjured this to feel safe, but is that really what you want. To be all alone in your mind with nothing but the stag in chains?”

“Why do you want this?” Hannibal whispered. “Why do you want to free something that can bring so much destruction? You saw what I have done to the guard.”

Kissing his partner’s forehead Will nodded. “I have, but this was not the real you. You were hurt and furious. There was no reason to your actions other than revenge. You are better than this Hannibal. I know you are. You just have to dare to live up to your abilities.”

Hesitantly reaching for the first chain, both Will and Hannibal realized that it was actually forged from words. Each and every one of the chains holding down the beast was made of one rule. Angrily Hannibal started to pull on the first one, bloodied his finger on the sharp edges, before sinking to the ground, breathing hard.

Aware that his partner would not be able to do this on his own, Will kidded the Ravenstag’s feathery cheek and approached his Omega. Sitting behind his partner, Will wrapped his fingers around the sharp edged restraint and demanded, “Explain the rule to me.”

“1. Rule: The slightest whim of your Alpha is your command. It means that I will do whatever you desire. I act according to your wishes before you even verbalize them.”

“And if I am at the academy. Or you are at work? You want to go back to work, don’t you, Hannibal?” Will asked softly. “Would this rule be of use under these circumstances?”

Remembering his office, not the wrong Alpha but Emily, the little girl he had been able to help so very much, both by supporting her in getting her gift under control and by killing her father, the psychiatrist shook his head marginally. For the first time Hannibal realized that sometimes people had to die and that the creature before him was not a mindless monster, but someone who could calculate without the limitations of a strict moral code. It could do what had to be done in order to make the lives of people better.

Closing his fingers around the golden words, not allowing them to bite into his skin a second time, Hannibal shook his head and breathed out, “No.” And together they watched the chain dissolve into nothing.

Reaching for the next chain, Hannibal decided, “I will always treat you with respect. You are my Alpha, the only person who ever saw me for what I am, who admired me for it even when the rest of the world would hate me or be disgusted by my actions. I don’t need a rule for this, you have earned my respect simply for being yourself.” And by gaining that conviction, the chain vanished.

Angrily Hannibal pulled at the next, hissing vehemently, “I have more to say than ‘Yes’ and ‘Alpha’. I am fluent in several languages, I can cook and paint, compose and I am well educated and deserve to be heard!” But only when Will smiled behind him and breathed into his ear, “That you do,” the degrading words evaporated.

When Hannibal closed his fingers around another strand, Will picked up the one next to it, looking into his Omega’s eyes, Will stated, “Neither were, nor will you ever be a servant, who obeys my every order. I cherish your opinion and need you open minded, able to contradict me when I say something wrong. If you can’t protect me, who will?” Easily the two rules floated away and Hannibal grimly reached for the next phrase.

Glaring at it he shuddered, because it was hard for him to contradict this one. “My heart will always belong to you, as will my soul. But my mind and my body belongs only to myself.” Even after that it was hard for the Omega to rip this chain apart but with Will’s help he threw it as far away from the stag as possible, hoping that it would never creep back into his mind.

Obviously at loss of how to deal with the next rule, Will wrapped his fingers gently around Hannibal’s own. The Alpha’s soft voice assured his Omega, “If you achieve something great, like helping a patient or making Emily laugh, you have every right to be content and happy about it. You don’t need me for that.” Easily the Alpha pulled the golden links from the Ravenstag’s body, but only when whispered, “I cherish the contentment you are able to achieve on your own,” and after kissing the chain he was able to blow it away.

Looking at the next row of words, Hannibal started to shiver slightly and Will felt a cold wind coming up. Tenderly he repeated his initial command, “Explain rule to me, Hannibal.”

“All of your actions must be based upon whether or not they please your Alpha.” Looking up at Will worriedly, Hannibal asked, “Is this not what a relationship between an Alpha and an Omega should be all about? That I do what pleases you?”

Gently caressing the black feathers underneath the constriction, Will asked, “This is a reflection of your mind, a majestic beast that has no qualms about taking human life. I am a profiler of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I work every day so that this world is a better place, safe from predators in human form. Still I am trying to help you, working with you to free yourself from these chains that keep your inner self confined. Doesn’t that tell you that your happiness, you being who you are is more important to me than being pleased by your actions?”

“But I have killed. And you were angry about it in the past.”

“Yes, and I have made my displeasure known then. Still, I have never, not once demanded from you to stop. Because this, you, are more important to me than anybody else.”

Hannibal could only look at Will, before he pulled his Alpha into the first hug he had initiated on his own ever since his abduction. “How do I deserve an Alpha like you?”

Lovingly caressing his partner, Will breathed over Hannibal’s neck, smiling when he got the desired reaction. “Because you are exactly what I need.”

The chain was gone when Will and Hannibal turned back towards the stag. Will angrily ripped the next one from the shining, black body, snarling, “You are not my property!”

Being accompanied by an equally vicious growl. “And my place is not on my knees by your side!” When Hannibal ripped the chain free he looked at it for a moment, his head slightly tilted. “Maybe by your side, or in front of you, or even between your legs, but that’s something else entirely.” Hannibal winked at his Alpha.

Choking on a laugh, Will gasped for breath, “Hannibal! No I won’t get the image of you on your knees out of my head. You really shouldn’t say something like that?”

Crouching closer, Hannibal buried his face in his Alpha’s neck, mumbling hushed, “Why? Does it not bring you pleasure?”

“Because we are not finished yet!” Will reminded him, pulling his neck away from his Omega’s soft lips.

“Yes, we are.” Hannibal decided, ripping the last chain away from the Ravenstag’s body. “I decide on my own duties. I decide what is important and when to see to it. I don’t need a stupid rule to remind me of that.”

Clearly relieved to be free of the restrains, the fantastic beast rose to his feet and shook his feathers.

Caressing the stag’s black nose, Hannibal smiled at Will when the Alpha pulled back from his mind.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Will's gentle fingers caressed Hannibal's face when the Omega opened his eyes to his bedroom. Slowly he relaxed from his huddled up position, turning around to see his Alpha sitting by his side, tiredly leaning against the headboard. Nudging his Alpha to lay down, putting his head to rest on Will's chest, Hannibal stated solemnly, "This is not over. The human mind might be pliable but …"

Tenderly caressing his Omega's neck, Will interrupted him, because tonight he did not want to hear any bad omens. "I know. But tonight was a good start. Now sleep, my love. We have a long day ahead of us."

"Yes, Alpha."

For a moment Will froze, but when he could feel Hannibal's low chuckle reverberating through his bones, he swatted him slightly over the head, before wrapping his arms around his Omega.

"Will?"

"Yes love?"

"Can I have my collar back?"

Smiling Will caressed his partner's neck and reached for the black necklace that had been wound around his wrist for the last few weeks fastening it around his partner's neck.

"With pleasure."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

The Pleasure of your Alpha

Weaves of pleasure washed over Will, waking him in the best way possible. Heavy hands on his stomach kept him down with a pleasant weight. When he opened his eyes, he saw Hannibal, splayed over the lower part of the bed, nuzzling along the length of his erection before nipping at the tip. The doctor's eyes sparkled mischievously before he wrapped his lips around Will again and painstakingly slowly took him into the warm, moist heat of his mouth.

Without Hannibal's strong hands, Will would have arched into the caress, most likely choking him because this felt so damn good and he had missed this so much. Not only the pleasure, though Hannibal had become an expert at this over the last few years, but his Omega being with him, right here, right now, without any distractions, heart, body and soul. When Hannibal continued his gentle ministrations, Will stuttered his eyes fluttering close, "What … what are you doing?"

"Well," Hannibal drew out the word, teasing the length of his Alpha's cock with the tip of his tongue. "I chose this action under the assumption that it will please you."

When Will looked at him, slightly alarmed, Hannibal playfully blew over his partner's glistering length, enjoying the shivers he was able to evoke. "And I hoped to receive pleasure in return."

Laughing, Will buckled up and turned the both of them around. Once he towered over his Omega, he growled slightly, "You are a horrible person. Teasing me with these words when you know how much I worry about them."

Lovingly caressing his Alpha's face, Hannibal captured his lips with a kiss, assuring him, "They are only words. Because of your help they hold no power over me any longer. And the more often I use them out of context the more they lose their previous meaning."

Touching their foreheads, the Omega whispered, "I missed you so much, Alpha, every single hour of every single day. I just want to be with you and be happy with it."

Will was grateful that Hannibal's eyes were closed. He was well aware that his partner was doing everything in his power to dispel the lingering conditioning, that still loomed like a dark cloud over his head. And Hannibal did a very good job with it. Still, he would have never addressed Will as 'Alpha' before. But they would work on that. For now they both wanted to be together and Will was more than happy to indulge his partner.

Sliding form the bed, he held out his hand. "Come on. Let's enjoy a hot bath before breakfast."

Oh and how very much they enjoyed it. Sliding together in the hot water, was more than Hannibal had dared to dream about these last few weeks, Will surrounding him, in his warm, fragranced water in the candle-lit bathroom. His every sense told him, that the cold and unpleasant surroundings of the cellar lay behind him.

Had he only experienced humiliation and abuse during his abduction, so he felt blissful when Will touched him, caressed him and stretched him slowly with the help of their bath-oil. Every motion was soft and tender. When the first finger entered his body he whimpered for the righteousness of the feeling. The second brought pure pleasure and the third nearly pushed him over the edge. Only with iron determination did the Omega keep himself under control until his Alpha finally entered him from behind, while he lay splayed over his chest.

Rocking them together ever so softly, Will revelled in the feeling of being joined with his Omega. For the longest time he did not want to do anything about it. He simply moved them in a languid motion, enjoying the subdued amount of friction they created.

But after a while, Hannibal's motions became more insistent, stronger, demanding, so the Alpha pushed his partner up, so that his Omega sat in his lap, caressing his hipbones, touching his thighs before closing his hand around Hannibal's leaking erection.

The Omega arched back with a pleased groan, pushing his shaft into the caress of Will's fingers, speeding up his movements, taking everything his Alpha had to offer. Soon Will too was panting, holding onto his partner, going deeper with every push, revelling in the demanding noises Hannibal produced. Sitting up in the tub, Will brushed his lips over his partner's chest, enjoying the moans and the shivers he was able to coax out of his lover. When he closed his teeth around one of Hannibal's nipples, he grinned at the unexpected shout the doctor was unable to supress.

After teasing the sensitive little nub, Will applied the same amount of pressure to the other part of Hannibal's chest, while rubbing his slightly callused fingers over the nipple he had just abandoned. He felt his Omega's nails raking over his back, enjoyed the forcefulness with which Hannibal demanded to be satisfied. When Will closed his lips around Hannibal's Adam's apple, pulling his Omega closer, rubbing over his stretched hole in addition to the intrusive shoves of his cock, his partner nearly choked on his cry of pleasure digging his fingernails deep into Will's shoulders, oh yes that would make a lovely pattern, spilling between their bodies.

Boneless, Hannibal sank back into the hot water, Will steadying him so that he would not drown. The Alpha had not chased his own peak because seeing his Omega all content and happy, after having missed him so dearly for so long, was enough to let his physical pleasure pale in comparison. Tenderly washing his partner's chest before cleaning his own, Will pulled Hannibal back into his arms, content to have his Omega so close again.

When Hannibal felt his Will's erection poking his stomach, he became aware that he had only seen to the fulfilment of his own desire, without caring about his Alpha. A lump of ice formed in his stomach. His Alpha's pleasure should have had priority over his own. Yet he had not even realized that Will had not been satisfied during their union. He was truly a failure as an Omega …

Shaking his head, forcefully dispelling these pathetic thoughts, Hannibal felt Will's soft thumb caressing his throat. Baring his neck to his Alpha, he took a deep breath to ease the tension. Will would not hurt him. His Alpha was the living proof of the validity of this

gesture. It was all about trust, and Hannibal's trust in Will Graham knew no bounds. When the gentle movements had managed to dispel his worries, the hand wrapped around his neck and pulled him close again, so that Hannibal could, once more, relax against his partner.

After a while Hannibal felt the need to address the matter, "You, … you did not come."

Chuckling lowly, since Hannibal's proximity and the sliding of his skin against Will's had effectively kept him from going soft, the Alpha answered, "Indeed, I did not," before slowly releasing his partner, sliding his hand over his own belly, lower and lower until he held his own erection in a firm grip.

"And you want to …" Hannibal started, swallowing with difficulty, drinking in the erotic picture of his partner taking matters into his own hand. Literally! "You want to take care of this yourself?" He whispered hoarsely, unable to look away.

"That depends," Will downright purred, basking in the attention of his partner. "Are you offering?"

When the first drop of precum left his cock, Will picked it up and spread it over the head. He had wanted to play a little, to make this encounter nice and easy for Hannibal, but he had not factored in the needy noise his partner made when seeing that. It shot straight to his cock and Will arched into his own caress, groaning blissfully. His Omega however, didn't seem to like this game very much, because in a heartbeat he battered Will's hand away, swallowing the Alpha whole, pulling his partner as close as possible, with a guttural growl.

From that moment on, nice and easy was the farthest thing from Will's mind. Hannibal's hunger for him felt primordial. Very much like on the day they had bonded. It was as if his Omega could not get enough of him, enough touch, enough smell, enough taste. Hannibal swallowed him down with ease, savouring every single drop Will was giving him. And even after Will had trembled through an overwhelming orgasm, Hannibal was only letting go when the Alpha nudged him away.

Slowly coming down from the heights of pleasure Hannibal had been able to invoke, Will realized that his shaking was not all his own. Hannibal too shivered every now and then, seemingly unable to keep his emotions under control. Opening himself to their bond, Will took a centring breath so that he would not get washed away by his Omega's feelings.

Despite of everything they had been able to achieve during the night and this morning, Hannibal still felt an undefeatable anxiety of not being good enough. He might have freed himself from the chains of the rules, but being beaten down for several weeks, both physically as well as mentally, was not easy to overcome. Now that the Ravenstag was free again, a part of Hannibal felt the need to consume Will, to take him all for himself, but a part of him still was ruled by the anxiety conditioned into him that he was not good enough for his Alpha.

Trying to ease his partner's mind, Will whispered into his ear, "You have been so good, Hannibal, so strong and brave and determined. I am so very proud of you." All the while he was caressing his partner, slowly feeling his tension ebbing away, while repeating this praise over and over.

Quite embarrassed, Hannibal mumbled after a while, "Sorry, I am …"

Only to be interrupted. "Don't, my love, don't apologize. This is not your fault. I am here, I am yours and whatever I can do to ease your mind, just take it."

Pulling back, leaving the tub to towel down and preparing his shaving utensils, Hannibal didn't look at Will. "That's not how it should be."

But the Alpha would have none of that. Before Hannibal could soap up his face, Will turned him around. "Yes, Hannibal, that's exactly how it should be. You are mine, my Omega, mine to care for, mine to protect. And I am your Alpha, your empath, yours to support, and to look after.

"An empath needs an anchor you knew that right from the beginning. You never saw a problem with helping me when I asked for it. Heavens you even helped me when I did not asking for it, simply for knowing that I was in need of your strength. This situation is no different. Take whatever you need, just like I do. You wouldn't want me to pull back all of a sudden, out of a wrong sense of propriety. Would you?"

Caressing his Alpha's face, Hannibal shook his head. "No, I would never want you to pull back when you know that I can help. It's just … it's harder when it's me."

Kissing his Omega most lovingly, Will whispered against his lips. "I know, my love. But we will get there. Together, we will get there, I promise."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Inquiries

After dressing Will found Hannibal in the kitchen. Though is Omega looked relaxed, the Alpha couldn't help but ask: "What are you doing, love?" The unspoken question if Hannibal was enjoying himself or serving his Alpha, maybe both, hung between them.

For a heartbeat Hannibal looked at the dish he was preparing, pouched eggs with a side of sprouts and a slice of ham. But when the toaster chimed and the doctor turned around reflexively to gather four golden roasted slices of toast to arrange on the plates, he smiled and picked up the finished dish. "I am entertaining a hobby. Would you please bring the coffee?"

Smiling, Will carried their cups to the dining room and together they enjoyed a peaceful meal. Sadly the peace didn't last long. Around eight Jack Crawford called, asking Will if Hannibal was ready to come to headquarters for further questioning. Unwilling to make decisions on Hannibal’s behalf, Will asked and told Jack that they would be there, in about an hour.

Sensing the underlying tension in Hannibal's posture, Will picked up their plates, stating off-handed, "If you don't mind giving me a lift, I would like to accompany you. I have sorely neglected my work for Jack and want to be brought to speed."

When Hannibal hugged him from behind, burying his face in Will's neck, the Alpha was aware that he had not fooled his Omega for a second. Still his partner seemed grateful for his attempt at normality and answered, "It will be my … Of course I can give you a ride." before letting go and preparing for the interview.

Will whistled for his dogs, who had slept in front of the fireplace until now, since both were well aware that they were allowed in neither the kitchen nor the dining room. He had to take care of one last thing, before taking them for a short walk. He had been proud of his little pack since they had been incredibly well behaved for these last few days. On their way to the FBI, the dogs remained by their side.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Will Graham earned a few confused looks when entering the FBI headquarters with his dogs, but since both Winston and Coco walked perfectly at heel, nobody dared to say anything. He still was the best profiler they had and everybody knew what had happened to his Omega. Though the older man appeared confident and calm when waking behind his Alpha, nobody wanted to get involved.

When Agent Crawford suggested that Will should take his dogs with him, Hannibal merely snapped his fingers beside his chair and Winston lay down obediently. Jack realized that, while Will was willing to give him and Hannibal some time alone, he was not ready to leave his Omega unprotected. Hannibal, visibly more confident than he had been a few days ago, just looked at Jack pointedly. Once the agent started to ignore the dog the doctor answered every question Jack could come up with politely.

He described the methods of his ‘education’: the soft tone on the tape he had been forced to listen to, the unbearable level of noise when he wasn’t, the brutality with which he had been treated and the condescending way Mr. Tailer had behaved whenever he had been around. Hannibal only exaggerated a little on the drug use. His blood from the clothes he had left in the shower had been tested. But the doctor was well aware, that after weeks of constant drug-abuse, it was hard to determine the dosage of the medication, without a given time-frame, something he was deliberately vague about.

All in all, Hannibal felt like Jack was willing to believe that he had killed these people in a drug-induced haze, traumatized by the abuse he had suffered, honestly fearing for his life. The agent not once mentioned the bullet. A little worried about his Alpha, Hannibal inquired about the bodies, but before Jack could go into detail, a wave of panic washed over the Omega.

Clutching the armrests tightly, Hannibal tried to calm down, but the fear and anxiety felt too similar to his own, so he had trouble fighting his way back to reality. At least until he felt a wet touch of his hand, and heard a vicious growl following the touch. When he blinked to get the room into focus, he saw Winston standing guard beside his chair, growling at Jack who tried to come closer. Only when Hannibal put his hand on the dog’s neck did the animal stand down. Without hesitation, the Omega rose and left the agent’s office.

“Hannibal, wait!” Jack followed on his heels, reaching for his shoulder to hold him back. “I didn’t give you permission to go. We were not finished. Tell me what is wrong with you?”

Looking coldly at the hand holding him back, Hannibal took a steeling breath.

~ An Omega must never hesitate when given an order. ~

That rule did *not* apply to him any longer! Will had helped him get rid of it. And besides, “You are not my Alpha, Jack. Please refrain from behaving as such.”

Raising his hands in a pacifying manner, Jack apologized, “I didn’t mean to. Just tell me what is going on.”

Trying to get a clearer picture, the Omega closed his eyes. “I don’t know. It’s cold. Something horrible has happened.”

“Just give me one second.” Jack asked, before returning to his office.

Hannibal tried desperately to send soothing emotions through their bond, but Will’s panic was blocking him completely. It was as if his Alpha was locked in his own brain and no one but Hannibal knew better what a spectacularly bad idea that was.

When Jack dashed past him, Hannibal followed en suit. “The morgue,” the Alpha explained and within moments they were in the elevator and on their way down.

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“Will, look at me. Please, my dear. Look at me.” Hannibal was trying his very best to snap his Alpha out of his panic attack. It was a long time since he had to deal with Will in such a deteriorated state of mind. Well aware that his abduction had weakened Will’s defences, he felt slightly guilty, but they would have time to discuss this when they were back home.

Sinking to his knees he pulled Will against his body, putting his Alpha’s hand against his chest, to get him to mirror his breathing. That proved difficult, since the profiler still clutched a picture. After coaxing it out of him, Hannibal suddenly understood what idea was tormenting Will’s mind.

Reaching for his phone he dialled without even looking. “Good morning, this is Dr. Hannibal Lecter, Emily Steward’s therapist. Could you please get her on the phone?

“No, I am afraid that cannot wait until drawing class is finished.

“No, nothing has happened to her mother, I can assure you, Mrs. Steward is perfectly fine. Still I have to insist that you get her for me.”

Hannibal tried his best to remain as calm as possible. The images that had flooded him, once he had gotten in contact with Will, had nearly pulled out the rug from under him. But seeing the picture of a young woman, with hair the same shade as Emily’s and a blouse that looked a lot like their little girl’s Sunday-dress, Hannibal understood what horrible ideas his partner’s mind had come up with.

Not once did he feel his recent experiences pushing in on him. All he could think of was making sure that his Alpha got better. He *was* strong enough to do this!

He put the girl on speaker when she finally answered, clearly anxious about the unexpected summoning. “Is mum alright? Did dad come back? Are you there Hannibal? What happened?”

Hannibal regretted the fear he was causing his little patient, but for now his Alpha was his main priority. “Nothing is wrong with your parents, zuikuti. Your dad is not here and your mom is fine.”

Apparently confused the little girl pondered. “Where is Will?” Brilliant as she was, she instantly jumped to the right conclusion. If her mother and Hannibal were alright, there was only one other person left for her to worry about.

Smiling, Hannibal promised, “Will, will be with us shortly. I promise.”

“Ahm. Okay.” Looking for a new topic, she finally asked. “What does shikuti mean?”

Chuckling slightly, relieved because Will was finally able to take deep breaths again, Hannibal revealed. “It’s zuikuti. That’s an endearment in my mother tongue. It roughly translates to ‘sweetheart’. If you want I can explain it to you next Thursday.” Seven days from now should not be too much of a strain for him to get back to his office. At least for his favourite patient.

Delighted by the prospect, Emily squeaked excitedly, “I can see you again? Will said that you were not well after being away. Mum said I couldn’t visit but I missed you so much Hannibal. Will was so sad when you were not around and after the first two weeks when you were away on business, I … I didn’t visit again.”

“Maybe we can go and have lunch on Sunday.” Will suggested softly. Looking up at Hannibal with gratitude, he tiredly put his head on his Omega’s shoulder and looked at the phone, reverently brushing over Emily’s picture with the tips of his fingers.

The little girl’s voice was equally quiet when she asked, worriedly, “Did the voices get to loud?”

Remembering on of their first conversations, where Emily had asked how Will shut out the voices and the empath had promised her to tell her once he knew how. Not willing to frighten the little girl, the profiler lied. “Yes, they did. Thank you for helping me to snap out of it.”

“I have got a crystal. It makes the head strong. I will ask mum to get you another one and bring it on Sunday. It’s lavender and all shiny and pretty.” Emily promised.

How easy the world of a child could be, Will sighed, when picking up the picture of the young woman that had caused his panic attack.

Hannibal ended the call, promising to extend the invitation to Emily’s mother and to call again, tomorrow the latest.

Brian Zeller was helping Will to his feet, looking slightly apologetic. Will gave back the picture and decided that he wanted to see the whole file on their latest killer.

Gazing at their superior, Jack reluctantly gave his permission. The scene right now had just proven that Will was not strong enough for this kind of work right now. But they were in over their heads and he desperately needed Will’s insight. He had only refrained from asking for the profilers help, because he had been well aware that, with his Omega gone, the Alpha would not have been fit for active duty.

Still, he gave them one constraint, before releasing the file, “Dr. Lecter will be with you, every step of the way.”

Looking at each other the pair nodded and said in unison, “Agreed.”

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An unexpected Guest

It was close to midnight when Will and Hannibal finally returned home. Apart from a light lunch and a few walks with the dogs, Will and Hannibal had locked themselves in Will's office for the rest of the day to go over the files Brian and Beverly had gathered for them. After lingering at Will's desk for a while, the Alpha had relocated to the couch and Hannibal, not thinking about it, had spread out the photos on the floor kneeling in the middle of them. Jack had just asked Will for a few minutes of his time around three but the profiler returned after only half an hour, loosing himself once again in this new investigation.

Leaning back against his Alpha's legs Hannibal had tried to get an insight into this killer's mind. He was brilliant, no doubt and that earned him the doctor's esteem.

Thinking about their killer, Hannibal did not even look at the junior agent who brought them take-out-boxes in the evening, merely reclaimed his place on the floor, forcing a box of food on Will, who tried to push it away, claiming no to be hungry.

Hannibal ended that discussion before it even started, by threatening the profiler to take away his files, if Will did not make time for dinner. The profiler had lost far too much weight during the last few months and Hannibal was determined to remedy that.

That night they fell into bed, barely conscious enough to shed their clothes. Before they could fall asleep Hannibal remembered Will leaving with Jack. "What did Jack want that he could not discuss it in my presence?" A tiny part of him rebelled against the inquisitive question. An Omega was meant to follow orders, not put his nose other people's business.

But Will only carded his fingers through his hair, chuckling tiredly. "He took me to the shooting range. He wanted one of my bullets to compare to the projectile from your crime scene. He did not mention it of course, but I am sure he dug one out of the dummy he had me shooting at."

Hannibal felt dread pooling in his stomach. The Omega only became aware of his fingers digging into Will's hips painfully, when the Alpha covered them with his hand to ease him. He could not think about what would happen, if Jack discovered that Will had shot the man. Hannibal was strong, he did not need to be told what do to. He could defend himself, he controlled his own actions, not matter what the other Alpha had tried to convince him off. But the mere idea of Will being locked away from him, never seeing him again was unbearable.

He only realized that he was shaking when Will kissed his head, soothing him quietly. "Shhh, it's alright. Don't worry, my love. Everything is going to be fine."

"How can you," Hannibal forced out, between clenched teeth. "How can you be so sure?"

Will's hand on his neck, rubbing calming circles over his clammy skin, did very little to ease the Omega. Will's words however managed the feat. "Because Jack is on our side, Hannibal. He merely wanted the evidence to exclude me as perpetrator."

"But you killed that bastard. With your service weapon!"

Lovingly caressing his partner, Will shook his head. "No, I did not. I killed him with this gun." Turning around, he opened his nightstand, and pulled out a weapon that looked alike to the one he wore for fieldwork.

"How … Why … Since when do you have two weapons?" Hannibal stammered a little incoherently, sitting up to take the weapon. He inspected it and looked over his shoulder to the cupboard where both, Will's weapon and bullets were put every evening before bed. He could not see any difference between the two guns.

Allowing his Omega the inspection before putting the weapon away again, Will smiled. "Ever since we bonded."

When Hannibal looked up at him, slightly confused, he continued. "I suspected that there might come a time when I would have to injure or kill someone, without the bullet being traced back to me. I am working for the FBI, I hear things. This weapon can't be traced since, officially, it does not even exist."

Taking in the extent of this statement, Hannibal breathed in awe, "You prepared yourself for the event that you would have to kill an innocent, just to protect me?"

Caressing his partner's cheek, enjoying that Hannibal leaned into the gesture, accepting the comfort he was offering, Will whispered, "Someone who tries to harm you is not innocent. Not in my book."

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After breakfast, Will asked, "Do you think that Jack will call upon you to talk about Tailer again?"

"I assume that depends on what the evidence. Most likely not I told him everything I know. At least he thinks so. Why are you asking?"

"I have to show you something." Will decided, offering his hand.

Slightly confused Hannibal took it, allowing Will to guide him to the cellar. As always, Winston and Coco where by their sides as soon as they left the kitchen. Strangely the dogs did not even try to steal the sandwich Will held in his hand.

The cool environment of his cellar had always been soothing to Hannibal. Here he had been able to create the most magnificent art. Even when Will had always been the only person able to appreciate it. When his Alpha briefly squeezed his hand, he remained at the entrance, the dogs at his heel.

“Something is different today,” a far too familiar voice observed, but from Hannibal’s point of view the Omega could only see Will, leaning against his steel table, holding a piece of the sandwich down, as if he was treating his dogs. Winston and Coco however remained at Hannibal’s side. Winston nudged his leg, asking to be petted when he sensed Hannibal’s distress.

After several moments, where Will said nothing, the shuffling of clothes could be heard and the Alpha Tailer crawled into view. Obviously it was expected of him to remain on his knees because after a few moments, where he didn’t move, the empath started to feed him bites of the sandwich.

Once the meagre meal was finished, the Alpha tried to start a conversation again. “Have you decided to finally tell me why you are holding me prisoner here?”

Will’s voice was so very soft, composed in a way Hannibal only ever heard when his empath was under great stress. “Maybe I just wanted to see how long it would take an Alpha to go down to his knees. While at the same time knowing, that my Omega never gave in.”

Snickering the Alpha pulled back. “Please, your Omega was begging for my touch within a day. He became an obedient little puppy under my care. You should thank me instead of trapping me here!”

Hannibal felt an all too familiar fury rise in his chest. How dare this Alpha belittle him? Even more so, how dare this Alpha belittle Will’s intelligence with so blatant lies?

But Will only smiled, “That is not true and we both know it. Hannibal would rather starve, than kneel before someone like you.”

“How can you be so sure?” the wrong Alpha snarled.

“Because I know my partner.” Will responded gently. “I am aware of who and what he is. I am also aware that you only see flaws and defiance. But had you observed and tried to understand instead of merely judging us, you would have realized that Hannibal was perfect for me, just the way he was.”

Snickering the other Alpha rose, tried to approach Will, but was held back by a chain around his neck. “And now you brought me here to educate me about my wrong-doings so that I can change him back? You should be grateful! Accept the gift I have given you!”

Tilting his head, Will smiled coldly. “You think too highly of yourself, if you believe that I would waste time or energy on you.”

“So you will execute your revenge and then dispose of me? Is that what you have in mind?” The trapped Alpha mocked. “You don’t have it in you Will Graham. You might be many things, but you are no killer.”

Nodding his head Will, agreed softly. “No, I am not.” Turning his head to look at Hannibal.

“Then why am I here?”

And suddenly the last puzzle-piece revealed itself and fell into place. This was for him, everything Will did, everything he had ever done was only for Hannibal, and the Omega treasured his Alpha all the more for it.

The doctor approached the pair, composed and calm in a way he had not been ever since his abduction. He looked down at the pitiful Alpha, who needed to push others to the floor to gain a semblance of dominance over those, he should be able to dominate naturally, up to his own Alpha, who had proven his superiority simply by being who he was.

Looking at Will reverently, Hannibal answered for him, without even gazing at Tailer. “You are here for me. So that I can take back what you have stolen.” Calculatingly watching the Alpha, who had tried to elevate himself into a position high above Hannibal, only to fall so much deeper.

“You are an Omega. You will not lay a finger on me!” Tailer ordered, trying to appear taller in a last act of defiance.

But neither Will nor Hannibal graced that statement with a comment. Hannibal had lowered his head in humility, feeling his Alpha’s hand on his neck, lovingly caressing the sensitive skin.

Quietly Will whispered, addressing the Alpha just like Hannibal had, while only looking at his Omega. “Had you ever understood the bond between Alphas and Omegas, you would have spared yourself a lot of humiliation and pain. If a bond is true, the partners are equals, needing each other to gain perfect balance.”

Sighing slightly Will looked down at the other Alpha one last time. “But as it is, your life will end like you have lived it, with a cold heart and never ending pain.”

Will kissed Hannibal’s forehead before stepping away.

The Alpha heard a steel-drawer open, Hannibal choosing a tool and the stuttering, unbelieving words of the Alpha who realized for the first time how very much he had underestimated Will’s Omega. The empath flicked for his dogs and obediently Winston and Coco joined him.

Behind them, the door to the sound-proved cellar fell shut, before the first scream could escape.

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Epilogue

“It tastes funny.”

“Zuikuti, it is rude to neglect a dish without even trying it.” Hannibal admonished, while smiling fondly.

Will enjoyed watching Emily and Hannibal discussing breakfast. True Hannibal had cooked a dish new to her, but after knowing the psychiatrist for nearly two years, the girl should really know better than to neglect anything without having a taste.

So Will told her with a gentle smile. “I know it is a taste you have to acquire, but if you combine the egg and the sauce and the English muffin it will be delicious. Trust me.”

Sighing deeply, as if this was a tremendous burden to her, the girl did as she was told and her face lit up as soon as she had swallowed the bite. “That’s good!”

Hannibal chuckled. “Don’t sound so surprised.” Stilling her hand when their guest tried to gore down her meal. True, Eggs Benedict were a breakfast dish and did not come in huge portions, but Will and Hannibal had learned over the last seven months, where they had been allowed to babysit Emily a few days in a row, that the girl knew no boundaries when she found something she liked.

Sometimes Emily still had bad dreams where memories of her abusive father resurfaced. But most of the time she was like every other, carefree young girl who swooned over the star in the latest show on TV and had a very good sense of what she liked and didn’t like. Such a contrast to the mute, constantly frightened little girl that had entered Hannibal study two years ago.

Will’s telephone pulled them out of their domestic bliss. Mrs. Steward was away on a seminar over the weekend and Hannibal and Will had cleared their schedule to take care of Emily. Someone demanding their attention spoke of an imminent crisis.

Taking out his mobile, Will looked at Hannibal worriedly when the caller-ID identified Jack Crawford.

Looking slightly uneasy Hannibal mouthed ‘Sorry’, looking crestfallen, when the Alpha left the dining-room.

Feeling the sudden tension, Emily abandoned her breakfast to crawl onto Hannibal’s lap. Soon she would be too big for that, but at the moment she was the perfect size, for cuddling. So very much like Mischa and the doctor wanted to savour every moment with her. All of this was a case of really bad timing, and he regretted it with all his heart.

Looking grave upon his return, Will informed his partner. “Jack want’s both of us.”

“What about Emily?”

Sighing slightly helpless, Will decided, “We will take her with us.”

Approaching the Omega and the little girl, he reached for Emily’s hand, kneeling before her. “Hannibal and I have to go to work. It won’t be nice and I don’t want you watching. Can we take you with us and you will stay in the car? Can you be good?”

Emily’s empathy had developed over the last year. Now that she was not afraid any longer, she had learned to listen to her feelings and those of the people around her, draw conclusions and acting accordingly. So she nodded, with an earnest expression on her face, aware of how very important this was for Will and Hannibal. “Promise!”

Bundled in her warmest coat with a scarf around her neck, Emily sat in the back of Hannibal’s car with Winston and Coco by her side. Patting the dogs, one after the other, she looked out of the window at the snowflakes that swirled around the car.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

Approaching a crime-scene in the middle of nowhere, Will exited the car after looking at Emily imploringly one last time. As was expected of him, Hannibal followed. They had driven for more than an hour, not that that was a surprise for Will. Still he looked at his superior officer Jack Crawford somewhat puzzled when the man intercepted his approach of the crime-scene.

“Will, maybe you should wait. This victim, we identified him already.”

“How?”

“We have been locking for him for quite some time. Now it seems that he has been found, but not in the way we have expected.” After taking a steeling breath, Jack revealed, “It is Simon Tailer, Will.”

The head of the behavioural science unit could see Will’s expression closing up. Looking over his right shoulder, gazing at Hannibal, the Alpha only allowed his partner to see his cold satisfaction. He only continued when his Omega ducked his head to hide his smile.

They had searched for this man high and low, now it seemed as if their latest serial killer had found him. The choice of the victims so far had been entirely random. So it was probable that this killing had nothing to do with Hannibal’s abduction. After having claimed four victims so far, Jack needed Will on this case, even if he doubted that Will would be able to see anything apart from the mutilated body.

The Alpha had to be furious at the man who had abducted his Omega. Who had sentenced his partner to both physical as well as psychological torture. On the other hand, Will was an empath, he could sympathize with the victims, needing their killer to be brought to justice. Maybe he could push past his feelings of resent and see something that would help.

Will surprised him when approaching the corpse, closing his eyes. It was presented in a protected area, high trees surrounded and covered the small space. The snow did not reach the body, but the cold had gotten to it. As every other victim so far, the corpse was cut open, with a precise Y-cut but additionally with several long incisions on his arms and legs. As with all the other victims not only his organs were missing, but also large strands of muscle. The victim was displayed beautifully, every incision a work of art, the skin carefully peeled back, not a cut too much, no torn flesh. This was the work of a master.

There was only one question left, “Tell me, Will. Is this the work of the surgeon?”

A rustling in the leaves behind them made all agents whip around. But Will was the one to react first. Stepping around a tall tree he kneeled before a very pale Emily and pulled her into his arms. He could feel her anxiety, had seen her eyes darting from the victim, to Hannibal and from the Omega to Jack Crawford in a heartbeat.

Will whispered into her ears, “A very bad man has done this. We have been looking for him for the last six months. Now that we have found another victim we are closer to catching him and then this will all be over. Can you believe that for me, Emily?”

After a heartbeat the little girl nodded and Will rose after hugging her tightly. “Hannibal?”

As expected his Omega was by his side in an instant. “Take Emily and wait in the car.”

“Yes, Will.”

In stressful situations the cursed ‘education’ pushed to the surface, but Hannibal was able to use Will’s name now. He had not called him ‘Alpha’ for a nearly a year. The Omega merely nodded and lifted Emily into his arms, carrying her back to their car.

Knowing that the two people that meant the most of him were safe, Will turned around and approached the crime-scene once again. After an anticipative breath he closed his eyes, opening them to the poetic death his Omega had staged.

When he looked up again, Jack implored once again, “Is it the surgeon?”

Gazing at his superior officer emotionless Will nodded, before turning around, leaving the clearing. The incident had been similar enough to the previous killings that Will felt comfortable to share many details. Once Jack was satisfied, they agreed to meet at headquarters on Monday.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

“You will not allow any of these men to hurt Hannibal. Will you?” Emily’s voice was small and timid.

The little girl was well aware that she should have waited in the car. Even though it was not the first time she had seen a dead body, she had to push through the unease it caused her.

However, corpses did not frightened her very much. She had existed too long beside a monster, to be afraid of the dead. Still, one of her friends in danger scared her very much.

Looking first at Emily, then reaching for Hannibal's hand, kissing his knuckles, Will promised, "Never."

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

On Sunday, Mrs. Steward picked up Emily. Of course they had to share the unfortunate incident and instantly the female Omega started to fuss over her daughter. But the little girl only reminded her, in a tone far too serious for her age, "Dead people are nothing to be afraid of. They can't hurt anyone."

Hannibal promised to see Emily both on Tuesday and Thursday for the next three weeks, and the mother was eased by the promise. The psychiatrist had done wonders for her little girl so she trusted him without restrictions.

When the women were gone, Hannibal turned towards the kitchen and started dinner preparations. Will sat in his armchair pretending to read, but really only watched his partner. After a little while he asked, "What are we going to eat tonight?"

"Well, I intended to prepare glazed liver with apples, onions and a side of fresh lamb's lettuce. For you …"

Hannibal interrupted himself, when he saw his Alpha smiling at him.

When the Omega tilted his head inquiring, Will decided, "I think I will have the same. If that's alright with you."

Hiding his utter delight behind a tiny, warm smile, Hannibal nodded. "As you wish, Will. It will be my pleasure."

~ Your greatest satisfaction is knowing that you please your Alpha. ~

It had taken a long time, but in the end Hannibal had allowed himself to accept this. This one rule had proven to be true, at least when you had an Alpha as extraordinary as Will Graham.

♔ ♙|♟ ♚

End Notes

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